

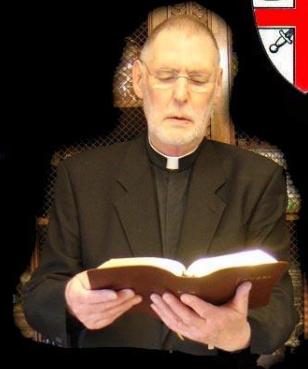


The Berea School of Theology and Ministries on Internet

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**Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path.
Psalm 119: 105**



Rev. Philippe L. De Coster, B.Th., D.D.

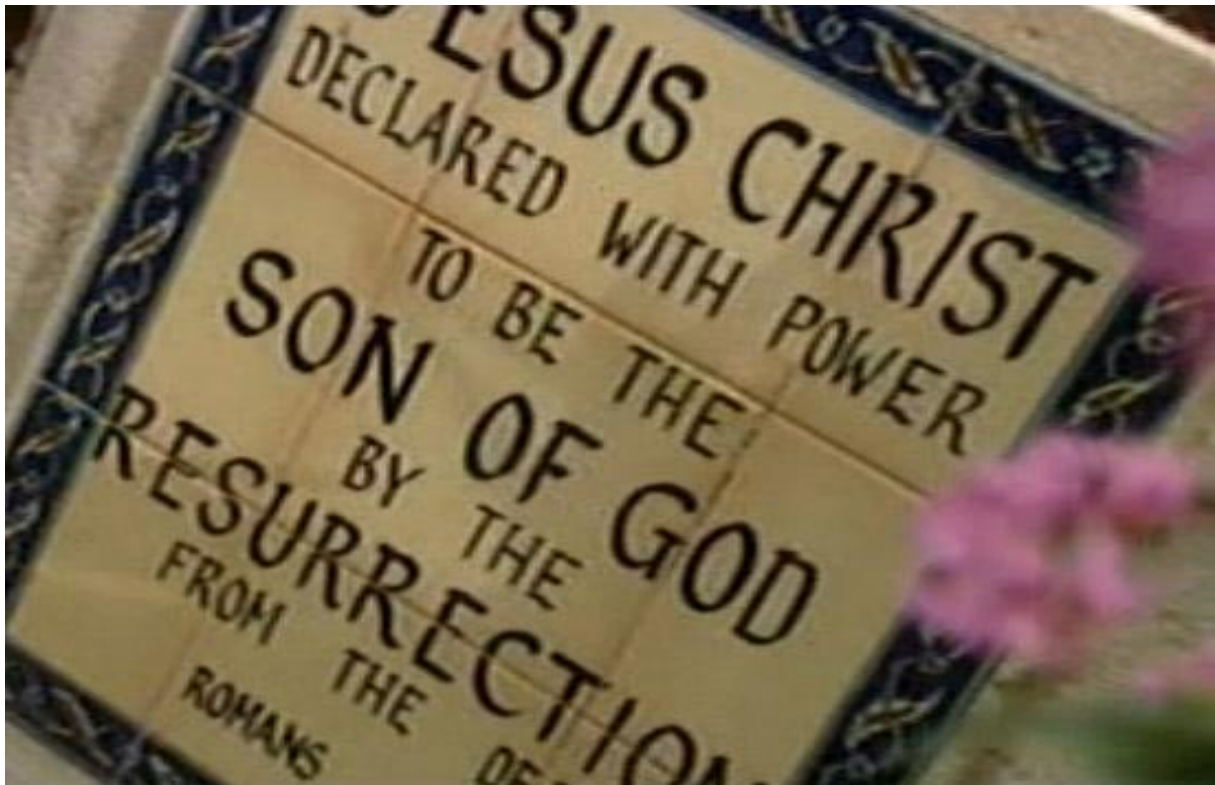
Evangelical House Churches

Berea Christian Doctrine Apologetics

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Christian apologetics is the discipline of defending Christianity through logical reasoning. I realize that the majority of you are non-Christians. This may be because you don't know much about Christianity, but it also may be because a lot of Christianity seems made up, unrealistic, or illogical. It also may be because you believe in another religion and you never took the time to look at Christianity. This page contains two kinds of topics. One topic is defending the validity of Christianity such as God, Jesus, and the Bible. The second topic is comparing other religions or cults to Christianity.



Introduction

Christianity is under attack today, and it must be defended. There are attacks from within by cults, sects, and heresies. And there are attacks from without by atheists, sceptics, and other religions. The discipline that deals with a rational defence of the Christian Faith is called apologetics. It comes from the Greek word *apologia* (cf. 1 Peter 3:15) which means to give a reason or defence.

Biblical apologetics is the field of Christian Theology by which a legitimate and valid defence or justification is made for our beliefs, on a reasoned, biblical and evidential basis. In it the faithful Christian seeks to debunk the presuppositions and assumptions behind the faithless positions. In this science of learning, we effectively demonstrates and communicates from the scriptures and creation, why man should believe God. This is a necessary aspect of faithful Christian living, since without a sound defence and hermeneutic, Apologetics is mere inference, supposition and hypothesis.

I. Significance of the Term Apologetics

Since Planck (1794) and Schleiermacher (1811), "*apologetics*" has been the accepted name of one of the theological disciplines or departments of theological science. The term is derived from the Greek *apologeisthai*, which embodies as its central notion the idea of "*defense*." In its present application, however, it has somewhat shifted its meaning, and we speak accordingly of

apologetics and apologies in contrast with each other. The relation between these two is not that of theory and practice (so e.g. Dusterdieck), nor yet that of genus and species (so e.g. Kubel). That is to say, apologetics is not a formal science in which the principles exemplified in apologies are investigated, as the principles of sermonizing are investigated in homiletics. Nor is it merely the sum of all existing or all possible apologies, or their quintessence, or their scientific exhibition, as dogmatics is the scientific statement of dogmas. Apologies are defences of Christianity, in its entirety, in its essence, or in some one or other of its elements or presuppositions, as against either all assailants, actual or conceivable, or some particular form or instance of attack; though, of course, as good defences they may rise above mere defenses and become vindications. Apologetics undertakes not the defense, **not** even the vindication, but the establishment, not, strictly speaking, of Christianity, but rather of that knowledge of God which Christianity professes to embody and seeks to make efficient in the world, and which it is the business of theology scientifically to explicate. It may, of course, enter into defense and vindication when in the prosecution of its task it meets with opposing points of view and requires to establish its own standpoint or conclusions. Apologies may, therefore, be embraced in apologetics, and form ancillary portions of its structure, as they may also do in the case of every other theological discipline. It is, moreover, inevitable that this or that element or aspect of apologetics will be more or less emphasized and cultivated, as the need of it is from time to time more or less felt. But apologetics does not derive its contents or take its form or borrow its value from the prevailing opposition; but preserves through all varying circumstances its essential character as a positive and constructive science which has to do with opposition only- like any other constructive science--as the refutation of opposing views becomes from time to time incident to construction. So little is defence or vindication of the essence of apologetics that there would be the same reason for its existence and the same necessity for its work, were there no opposition in the world to be encountered and no contradiction to be overcome. It finds its deepest ground, in other words, not in the accidents which accompany the efforts of true religion to plant, sustain, and propagate itself in this world; not even in that most pervasive and most portentous of all these accidents, the accident of sin; but in the fundamental needs of the human spirit. If it is incumbent on the believer to be able to give a reason for the faith that is in him, it is impossible for him to be a believer without a reason for the faith that is in him; and it is the task of apologetics to bring this reason clearly out in his consciousness, and make its validity plain. It is, in other words, the function of apologetics to investigate, explicate, and establish the grounds on which a theology -- a science, or systematized knowledge of God- is possible; and on the basis of which every science which has God for its object must rest, if it be a true science with claims to a place within the circle of the sciences. It necessarily takes its place, therefore, at the

head of the departments of theological science and finds its task in the establishment of the validity of that knowledge of God which forms the subject-matter of these departments; that we may then proceed through the succeeding departments of exegetical, historical, systematic, and practical theology, to explicate, appreciate, systematize, and propagate it in the world.

2. Place Among The Theological Disciplines

It must be admitted that considerable confusion has reigned with respect to the conception and function of apologetics, and its place among the theological disciplines. Nearly every writer has a definition of his own, and describes the task of the discipline in a fashion more or less peculiar to himself; and there is scarcely a corner in the theological encyclopedia into which it has not been thrust. Planck gave it a place among the exegetical disciplines; others contend that its essence is historical; most wish to assign it either to systematic or practical theology. Nosselt denies it all right of existence; Palmer confesses inability to classify it; Rabiger casts it formally out of the encyclopedia, but reintroduces it under the different name of "theory of religion." Tholuck proposed that it should be apportioned through the several departments; and Cave actually distributes its material through three separate departments. Much of this confusion is due to a persistent confusion of apologetics with apologies. If apologetics is the theory of apology, and its function is to teach men how to defend Christianity, its place is, of course, alongside of homiletics, catechetics, and poimenics in practical theology. If it is simply, by way of eminence, the apology of Christianity, the systematically organized vindication of Christianity in all its elements and details, against all opposition- or in its essential core against the only destructive opposition -- it of course presupposes the complete development of Christianity through the exegetical, historical, and systematic disciplines, and must take its place either as the culminating department of systematic theology, or as the intellectualistic side of practical theology, or as an independent discipline between the two. In this case it can be only artificially separated from polemic theology and other similar disciplines--if the analysis is pushed so far as to create these, as is done by F. Duilhe de Saint-Projet who distinguishes between apologetical, controversial, and polemic theology, directed respectively against unbelievers, heretics, and fellow believers, and by A. Kuyper who distinguishes between polemics, elenctics, and apologetics, opposing respectively heterodoxy, paganism, and false philosophy. It will not be strange, then, if, though separated from these kindred disciplines it, or some of it, should be again united with them, or some of them, to form a larger whole to which is given the same encyclopedic position. This is done for example by Kuyper who joins polemics, elenctics, and apologetics together to form his "*antithetic* dogmatological" group of disciplines; and by F. L. Patton who, after having distributed the material of apologetics into the two separate disciplines of

rational or philosophical theology, to which as a thetic discipline a place is given at the outset of the system, and apologetics, joins the latter with polemics to constitute the antithetical disciplines, while systematic theology succeeds both as part of the synthetic disciplines.

3. Source of Divergent Views

Much of the diversity in question is due also, however, to varying views of the thing which apologetics undertakes to establish; whether it be, for example, the truth of the Christian religion, or the validity of that knowledge of God which theology presents in systematized form. And more of it still is due to profoundly differing conceptions of the nature and subject-matter of that "*theology*," a department of which apologetics is. If we think of apologetics as undertaking the defence or the vindication or even the justification of the "*Christian religion*," that is one thing; if we think of it as undertaking the establishment of the validity of that knowledge of God, which "*theology*" systematizes, that may be a very different thing. And even if agreement exists upon the latter conception, there remain the deeply cutting divergences which beset the definition of "*theology*" itself. Shall it be defined as the "*science of faith* "? or as the "*science of religion* "? or as the "*science of the Christian religion* "? or as the "*science of God* "? In other words, shall it be regarded as a branch of psychology, or as a branch of history, or as a branch of science? Manifestly those who differ thus widely as to what theology is, cannot be expected to agree as to the nature and function of any one of its disciplines. If "*theology*" is the science of faith or of religion, its subject-matter is the subjective experiences of the human heart; and the function of apologetics is to inquire whether these subjective experiences have any objective validity. Of course, therefore, it follows upon the systematic elucidation of these subjective experiences and constitutes the culminating discipline of "*theology*." Similarly, if "*theology*" is the science of the Christian religion, it investigates the purely historical question of what those who are called Christians believe; and of course the function of apologetics is to follow this investigation with an inquiry whether Christians are justified in believing these things. But if theology is the science of God, it deals not with a mass of subjective experiences, nor with a section of the history of thought, but with a body of objective facts; and it is absurd to say that these facts must be assumed and developed unto their utmost implications before we stop to ask whether they are facts. So soon as it is agreed that theology is a scientific discipline and has as its subject-matter the knowledge of God, we must recognize that it must begin by establishing the reality as objective facts of the data upon which it is based. One may indeed call the department of theology to which this task is committed by any name which appears to him appropriate: it may be called "*general theology*," or "*fundamental theology*," or "*principal theology*," or "*philosophical theology*," or

"rational theology," or "natural theology," or any other of the innumerable names which have been used to describe it. Apologetics is the name which most naturally suggests itself, and it is the name which, with more or less accuracy of view as to the nature and compass of the discipline, has been consecrated to this purpose by a large number of writers from Schleiermacher down (e.g. Pelt, Twisten, Baum-stark, Swetz, Ottiger, Knoll, Maissoneuve). It powerfully commends itself as plainly indicating the nature of the discipline, while equally applicable to it whatever may be the scope of the theology which it undertakes to plant on a secure basis. Whether this theology recognizes no other knowledge of God than that given in the constitution and course of nature, or derives its data from the full revelation of God as documented in the Christian Scriptures, apologetics offers itself with equal readiness to designate the discipline by which the validity of the knowledge of God set forth is established. It need imply no more than natural theology requires for its basis; when the theology which it serves is, however, the complete theology of the Christian revelation, it guards its unity and protects from the fatally dualistic conception which sets natural and revealed theology over against each other as separable entities, each with its own separate presuppositions requiring establish-ment-by which apologetics would be split into two quite diverse disciplines, given very different places in the theological encyclopaedia.

4. The True Task of Apologetics

It will already have appeared how far apologetics may be defined, in accordance with a very prevalent custom (e.g. Sack, Lechler, Ebrard, Kubel, Lemme) as "the science which establishes the truth of Christianity as the absolute religion." Apologetics certainly does establish the truth of Christianity as the absolute religion. But the question of importance here is how it does this. It certainly is not the business of apologetics to take up each tenet of Christianity in turn and seek to establish its truth by a direct appeal to reason. Any attempt to do this, no matter on what philosophical basis the work of demonstration be begun or by what methods it be pursued, would transfer us at once into the atmosphere and betray us into the devious devices of the old vulgar rationalism, the primary fault of which was that it asked for a direct rational demonstration of the truth of each Christian teaching in turn. The business of apologetics is to establish the truth of Christianity as the absolute religion directly only as a whole, and in its details only indirectly. That is to say, we are not to begin by developing Christianity into all its details, and only after this task has been performed, tardily ask whether there is any truth in all this. We are to begin by establishing the truth of Christianity as a whole, and only then proceed to explicate it into its details, each of which, if soundly explicated, has its truth guaranteed by its place as a detail in an entity already established in its entirety. Thus we are delivered from what is perhaps the most distracting question which has vexed the whole history

of the discipline. In establishing the truth of Christianity, it has been perennially asked, are we to deal with all its details (e.g. H.B. Smith), or merely with the essence of Christianity (e.g. Kubel). The true answer is, neither. Apologetics does not presuppose either the development of Christianity into its details, or the extraction from it of its essence. The details of Christianity are all contained in Christianity: the minimum of Christianity is just Christianity itself. What apologetics undertakes to establish is just this Christianity itself -- including all its "*details*" and involving its "*essence*" -- in its unexplicated and uncompressed entirety, as the absolute religion. It has for its object the laying of the foundations on which the temple of theology is built, and by which the whole structure of theology is determined. It is the department of theology which establishes the constitutive and regulative principles of theology as a science; and in establishing these it establishes all the details which are derived from them by the succeeding departments, in their sound explication and systematization. Thus it establishes the whole, though it establishes the whole in the mass, so to speak, and not in its details, but yet in its entirety and not in some single element deemed by us its core, its essence, or its minimum expression.

5. Division of Apologetics

The subject-matter of apologetics being determined, its distribution into its parts becomes very much a matter of course. Having defined apologetics as the proof of the truth of the Christian religion, many writers naturally confine it to what is commonly known somewhat loosely as the "evidences of Christianity." Others, defining it as "fundamental theology," equally naturally confine it to the primary principles of religion in general. Others more justly combine the two conceptions and thus obtain at least two main divisions. Thus Hermann Schultz makes it prove "*the* right of the religious conception of the world, as over against the tendencies to the denial of religion, and the right of Christianity as the absolutely perfect manifestation of religion, as over against the opponents of its permanent significance." He then divides it into two great sections with a third interposed between them: the first, "*the* apology of the religious conception of the world "; the last, "the apology of Christianity "; while between the two stands "the philosophy of religion, religion in its historical manifestation." Somewhat less satisfactorily, because with a less firm hold upon the idea of the discipline, Henry B. Smith, viewing apologetics as "*historico-philosophical* dogmatics," charged with the defence of "*the* whole contents and substance of the Christian faith," divided the material to much the same effect into what he calls fundamental, historical, and philosophical apologetics. The first of these undertakes to demonstrate the being and nature of God; the second, the divine origin and authority of Christianity; and the third, somewhat lamely as a conclusion to so high an argument, the superiority of Christianity to all other systems. Quite similarly Francis R. Beattie divided into (1) fundamental or

philosophical apologetics, which deals with the problem of God and religion; (2) Christian or historical apologetics, which deals with the problem of revelation and the Scriptures; and (3) applied or practical apologetics, which deals with the practical efficiency of Christianity in the world. The fundamental truth of these schematizations lies in the perception that the subject-matter of apologetics embraces the two great facts of God and Christianity. There is some failure in unity of conception, however, arising apparently from a deficient grasp of the peculiarity of apologetics as a department of theological science, and a consequent inability to permit it as such to determine its own contents and the natural order of its constituent parts.

6. The Conception of Theology as a Science

If theology be a science at all, there is involved in that fact, as in the case of all other sciences, at least these three things: the reality of its subject-matter, the capacity of the human mind to receive into itself and rationally to reflect this subject-matter, the existence of media of communication between the subject-matter and the percipient and understanding mind. There could be no psychology were there not a mind to be investigated, a mind to investigate, and a self-consciousness by means of which the mind as an object can be brought under the inspection of the mind as subject. There could be no astronomy were there no heavenly bodies to be investigated, no mind capable of comprehending the laws of their existence and movements, or no means of observing their structure and motion. Similarly there can be no theology, conceived according to its very name as the science of God, unless there is a God to form its subject-matter, a capacity in the human mind to apprehend and so far to comprehend God, and some media by which God is made known to man. That a theology, as the science of God, may exist, therefore, it must begin by establishing the existence of God, the capacity of the human mind to know Him, and the accessibility of knowledge concerning Him. In other words, the very idea of theology as the science of God gives these three great topics which must be dealt with in its fundamental department, by which the foundations for the whole structure are laid- God, religion, revelation. With these three facts established, a theology as the science of God becomes possible; with them, therefore, an apologetic might be complete. But that, only provided that in these three topics all the underlying presuppositions of the science of God actually built up in our theology are established; for example, provided that all the accessible sources and means of knowing God are exhausted. No science can arbitrarily limit the data lying within its sphere to which it will attend. On pain of ceasing to be the science it professes to be, it must exhaust the means of information open to it, and reduce to a unitary system the entire body of knowledge in its sphere. No science can represent itself as astronomy, for example, which arbitrarily confines itself to the information concerning the heavenly bodies obtainable by

the unaided eye, or which discards, without sound ground duly adduced, the aid of, say, the spectroscope. In the presence of Christianity in the world making claim to present a revelation of God adapted to the condition and needs of sinners, and documented in Scriptures, theology cannot proceed a step until it has examined this claim; and if the claim be substantiated, this substantiation must form a part of the fundamental department of theology in which are laid the foundations for the systematization of the knowledge of God. In that case, two new topics are added to the subject-matter with which apologetics must constructively deal, Christianity--and the Bible. It thus lies in the very nature of apologetics as the fundamental department of theology, conceived as the science of God, that it should find its task in establishing the existence of a God who is capable of being known by man and who has made Himself known, not only in nature but in revelations of His grace to lost sinners, documented in the Christian Scriptures. When apologetics has placed these great facts in our hands--God, religion, revelation, Christianity, the Bible--and not till then are we prepared to go on and explicate the knowledge of God thus brought to us, trace the history of its workings in the world, systematize it, and propagate it in the world.

7. The Five Subdivisions of Apologetics

The primary subdivisions of apologetics are therefore five, unless for convenience of treatment it is preferred to sink the third into its most closely related fellow. (1) The first, which may perhaps be called philosophical apologetics, undertakes the establishment of the being of God, as a personal spirit, the creator, preserver, and governor of all things. To it belongs the great problem of theism, with the involved discussion of the antitheistic theories. (2) The second, which may perhaps be called psychological apologetics, undertakes the establishment of the religious nature of man and the validity of his religious sense. It involves the discussion alike of the psychology, the philosophy, and the phenomenology of religion, and therefore includes what is loosely called "*comparative religion*" or the "*history of religions*." (3) To the third falls the establishment of the reality of the supernatural factor in history, with the involved determination of the actual relations in which God stands to His world, and the method of His government of His rational creatures, and especially His mode of making Himself known to them. It issues in the establishment of the fact of revelation as the condition of all knowledge of God, who as a personal Spirit can be known only so far as He expresses Himself; so that theology differs from all other sciences in that in it the object is not at the disposal of the subject, but vice versa. (4) The fourth, which may be called historical apologetics, undertakes to establish the divine origin of Christianity as the religion of revelation in the special sense of that word. It discusses all the topics which naturally fall under the popular caption of the "*evidences of Christianity*." (5)

The fifth, which may be called bibliological apologetics, undertakes to establish the trustworthiness of the Christian Scriptures as the documentation of the revelation of God for the redemption of sinners. It is engaged especially with such topics as the divine origin of the Scriptures; the methods of the divine operation in their origination; their place in the series of redemptive acts of God, and in the process of revelation; the nature, mode, and effect of inspiration; and the like.

8. The Value of Apologetics

The estimate which is put upon apologetics by scholars naturally varies with the conception which is entertained of its nature and function. In the wake of the subjectivism introduced by Schleiermacher, it has become very common to speak of such an apologetic as has just been outlined with no little scorn. It is an evil inheritance, we are told, from the old *supranaturalismus vulgaris*, which "took its standpoint not in the Scriptures but above the Scriptures, and imagined it could, with formal conceptions, develop a 'ground for the divine authority of Christianity' (Heubner), and therefore offered proofs for the divine origin of Christianity, the necessity of revelation, and the credibility of the Scriptures" (Lemme). To recognize that we can take our standpoint in the Scriptures only after we have Scriptures, authenticated as such, to take our standpoint in, is, it seems, an outworn prejudice. The subjective experience of faith is conceived to be the ultimate fact; and the only legitimate apologetic, just the self-justification of this faith itself. For faith, it seems, after Kant, can no longer be looked upon as a matter of reasoning and does not rest on rational grounds, but is an affair of the heart, and manifests itself most powerfully when it has no reason out of itself (Brunetiere). If repetition had probative force, it would long ago have been established that faith, religion, theology, lie wholly outside of the realm of reason, proof, and demonstration.

It is, however, from the point of view of rationalism and mysticism that the value of apologetics is most decried. Wherever rationalistic preconceptions have penetrated, there, of course, the validity of the apologetic proofs has been in more or less of their extent questioned. Wherever mystical sentiment has seeped in, there the validity of apologetics has been with more or less emphasis doubted. At the present moment, the rationalistic tendency is most active, perhaps, in the form given it by Albrecht Ritschl. In this form it strikes at the very roots of apologetics, by the distinction it erects between theoretical and religious knowledge. Religious knowledge is not the knowledge of fact, but a perception of utility; and therefore positive religion, while it maybe historically conditioned, has no theoretical basis, and is accordingly not the object of rational proof. In significant parallelism with this, the mystical tendency is manifesting itself at the present day most distinctly in a widespread inclination

to set aside apologetics in favour of the "*witness* of the Spirit." The convictions of the Christian man, we are told, are not the product of reason addressed to the intellect, but the immediate creation of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Therefore, it is intimated, we may do very well without these reasons, if indeed they are not positively noxious, because tending to substitute a barren intellectualism for a vital faith. It seems to be forgotten that though faith be a moral act and the gift of God, it is yet formally conviction passing into confidence; and that all forms of convictions must rest on evidence as their ground, and it is not faith but reason which investigates the nature and validity of this ground. "*He* who believes," says Thomas Aquinas, in words which have become current as an axiom, "would not believe unless he saw that what he believes is worthy of belief." Though faith is the gift of God, it does not in the least follow that the faith which God gives is an irrational faith, that is, a faith without cognizable ground in right reason. We believe in Christ because it is rational to believe in Him, not even though it be irrational. Of course mere reasoning cannot make a Christian; but that is not because faith is not the result of evidence, but because a dead soul cannot respond to evidence. The action of the Holy Spirit in giving faith is not apart from evidence, but along with evidence; and in the first instance consists in preparing the soul for the reception of the evidence.

9. Relation of Apologetics to the Christian Faith

This is not to argue that it is by apologetics that men are made Christians, but that apologetics supplies to Christian men the systematically organized basis on which the faith of Christian men must rest. All that apologetics explicates in the forms of systematic proof is implicit in every act of Christian faith. Whenever a sinner accepts Jesus Christ as his Saviour, there is implicated in that act a living conviction that there is a God, knowable to man, who has made Himself known in a revelation of Himself for redemption in Jesus Christ, as is set down in the Scriptures. It is not necessary for his act of faith that all the grounds of this conviction should be drawn into full consciousness and given the explicit assent of his understanding, though it is necessary for his faith that sufficient ground for his conviction be actively present and working in his spirit. But it is necessary for the vindication of his faith to reason in the form of scientific judgment, that the grounds on which it rests be explicated and established. Theology as a science, though it includes in its culminating discipline, that of practical theology, an exposition of how that knowledge of God with which it deals objectively may best be made the subjective possession of man, is not itself the instrument of propaganda; what it undertakes to do is systematically to set forth this knowledge of God as the object of rational contemplation. And as it has to set it forth as knowledge, it must of course begin by establishing its right to rank as such. Did it not do so, the whole of its work would hang in the air, and theology would present the odd spectacle among the sciences of

claiming a place among a series of systems of knowledge for an elaboration of pure assumptions.

10. The Earliest Apologetics

Seeing that it thus supplies an insistent need of the human spirit, the world has, of course, never been without its apologetics. Whenever men have thought at all they have thought about God and the supernatural order; and whenever they have thought of God and the supernatural order, there has been present to their minds a variety of more or less solid reasons for believing in their reality. The nucleation of these reasons into a systematically organized body of proofs waited of course upon advancing culture. But the advent of apologetics did not wait for the advent of Christianity; nor are traces of this department of thought discoverable only in the regions lit up by special revelation. The philosophical systems of antiquity, especially those which derive from Plato, are far from empty of apologetical elements; and when in the later stages of its development, classical philosophy became peculiarly religious, express apologetical material became almost predominant. With the coming of Christianity into the world, however, as the contents of the theology to be stated became richer, so the efforts to substantiate it became more fertile in apologetical elements. We must not confuse the apologies of the early Christian ages with formal apologetics. Like the sermons of the day, they contributed to apologetics without being it. The apologetic material developed by what one may call the more philosophical of the apologists (Aristides, Athenagoras, Tatian, Theophilus, Hermias, Tertullian) was already considerable; it was largely supplemented by the theological labours of their successors. In the first instance Christianity, plunged into a polytheistic environment and called upon to contend with systems of thought grounded in pantheistic or dualistic assumptions, required to establish its theistic standpoint; and as over against the bitterness of the Jews and the mockery of the heathen (e.g. Tacitus, Fronto, Crescens, Lucian), to evince its own divine origin as a gift of grace to sinful man. Along with Tertullian, the great Alexandrians, Clement and Origen, are the richest depositaries of the apologetic thought of the first period. The greatest apologists of the patristic age were, however, Eusebius of Caesarea and Augustine. The former was the most learned and the latter the most profound of all the defenders of Christianity among the Fathers. And Augustine, in particular, not merely in his *"City of God"* but in his controversial writings, accumulated a vast mass of apologetical material which is far from having lost its significance even yet.

11. The Later Apologetics

It was not, however, until the scholastic age that apologetics came to its rights as a constructive science. The whole theological activity of the Middle Ages was so far ancillary to apologetics, that its primary effort was the justification of faith

to reason. It was not only rich in apologists (Agobard, Abelard, Raymund Martini), but every theologian was in a sense an apologist. Anselm at its beginning, Aquinas at its culmination, are types of the whole series; types in which all its excellencies are summed up. The Renaissance, with its repristination of heathenism, naturally called out a series of new apologists (Savonarola, Marsilius Ficinus, Ludovicus Vives), but the Reformation forced polemics into the foreground and drove apologetics out of sight, although, of course, the great theologians of the Reformation era brought their rich contribution to the accumulating apologetical material. When, in the exhaustion of the seventeenth century, irreligion began to spread among the people and indifferentism ripening into naturalism among the leaders of thought, the stream of apologetical thought was once more started flowing, to swell into a great flood as the prevalent unbelief intensified and spread. With a forerunner in Philippe de Mornay (1581), Hugo Grotius (1627) became the typical apologist of the earlier portion of this period, while its middle portion was illuminated by the genius of Pascal (d. 1662) and the unexampled richness of apologetical labor in its later years culminated in Butler's great "Analogy" (1736) and Paley's plain but powerful argumentation. As the assault against Christianity shifted its basis from the English deism of the early half of the eighteenth century through the German rationalism of its later half, the idealism which dominated the first half of the nineteenth century, and thence to the materialism of its later years, period after period was marked in the history of apology, and the particular elements of apologetics which were especially cultivated changed with the changing thought. But no epoch was marked in the history of apologetics itself, until under the guidance of Schleiermacher's attempt to trace the organism of the departments of theology, K. H. Sack essayed to set forth a scientifically organized "Christian Apologetics" (Hamburg, 1829; ed. 2, 1841). Since then an unbroken series of scientific systems of apologetics has flowed from the press. These differ from one another in almost every conceivable way; in their conception of the nature, task, compass, and encyclopedic place of the science; in their methods of dealing with its material; in their conception of Christianity itself; and of religion and of God and of the nature of the evidence on which belief in one or the other must rest. But they agree in the fundamental point that apologetics is conceived by all alike as a special department of theological science, capable of and demanding separate treatment. In this sense apologetics has come at last, in the last two-thirds of the nineteenth century, to its rights. The significant names in its development are such as, perhaps, among the Germans, Sack, Steudel, Delitzsch, Ebrard, Baumstark, T511e, Kratz, Kiibel, Steude, Frank, Kal-tan, Vogel, Schultz, Kahler; to whom may be added such Romanists as Drey, Dieringer, Staudenmeyer, Ilettinger, Schanz, and such English-speaking writers as Hetherington, H. B. Smith, Bruce, Rishell, and Beattie.

I. Objections to Defending the Faith: Biblical and Extra-Biblical

Many objections have been offered against doing apologetics. Some offer an attempted biblical justification. Others are based in extra-biblical reasoning. First, let's take a look at those based on biblical texts.

The central claims of God's revelation should be understood, explained and defended. I thank the one true God that this journal and those involved in apologetics ministries are providing sound reasons for the faith and are challenging the critics of Christianity.

On the other hand, ambitious Christian apologists often lose something indispensable in the very process of defending the indispensable. In refusing to jettison the idea of truth, we often jettison humility instead. We can become, as the student feared, arrogant. We may hold the truth falsely.

It is dangerously easy for apologists to become prideful when we identify the truth with our ego instead of with God Himself. Instead of contending for "the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3), we may end up contending for our *own* infallibility.

We should heed Blaise Pascal, who wrote in his "Pensées" (Thoughts on Religion and Some Other Subjects) that "it is false piety to preserve peace at the expense of truth. It is also false zeal to preserve truth at the expense of charity."

Several facts can point us toward the fruitful partnership of true piety and true zeal. First, Christian truth is best defended when it is *held both firmly and humbly*-- in the manner one would hold a newborn child. It is infinitely precious and therefore worth defending; but it is a gift not of our own making.

We lay no claim to its greatness or even to the fact that we recognize it as truth (Ephesians 2:8-9). We know by grace that grace may be known. If we speak of "our faith" we should emphasize that the truth is not our possession; rather the truth possesses us.

No one put it better than G.K. Chesterton in 'Orthodoxy' who confessed concerning Christianity: "I will not call it my philosophy; for I did not make it. God and humanity made it; and it made me."

Second, our knowledge of biblical truth should *grow over a lifetime*. Orthodoxy will always exceed my present understanding of orthodoxy. The humble apologist will defend Christianity's core claims to the best of his ability - the inspiration of Scripture, the Trinity, the Incarnation,

justification by faith, and so on -- while remaining open to discussion about less central and more debatable issues such as the particularities of eschatology or church government.

Third, Jesus said that the meek, not the belligerent, will inherit the earth. No matter how winsome the presentation, the gospel will offend those with hardened hearts; but we should - avoid increasing the offense through arrogance-.

Paul is a model when he says, "We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us" (2 Cor. 4:7). The principles of Paul's pastoral instruction to Timothy apply to all apologists: "And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must

be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 2:24-25). Our aim should be to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).

Fourth, no matter how adept our advocacy of the faith, we must *glory in the Lord and not in our apologetic prowess*. Without humility, even the best arguments will ring hollow. Our aim in defending the gospel is to set people free, not to defend ourselves or to acquit ourselves of all error.

The humble apologist stands valiantly for God's absolute, objective, and universal truth, even as he stands on feet of clay with an ear open to correction.

Fifth, whatever our skill at defending the faith, any humble presentation of Christian truth is a powerful tool in God's hands. The Lord opposes the proud and exalts the humble (Matt. 23:12; James 4:6). Christian humility is an arresting apologetic in and of itself.

Those who with plain speech forget themselves in service of Christ outshine those who eloquently defend only their egos.

A. Objections to Apologetics from Within the Bible

A Question

Does logic have a place in the study of Scripture?

Modern evangelical theologians have, at best, given a very ambiguous answer to this question. While not entirely rejecting the use of logic—who can?—they nevertheless refuse to face many of the logical consequences of their own

teachings, teach many logically inconsistent doctrines, such as the doctrine of two contradictory wills in God, and decry those who insist on a logical construction of the truth as rationalists.

When their inconsistencies are pointed out they sneer at “mere human logic,” and speak of “mystery” or of “antinomy,” “tension,” and of apparent or real contradictions in the Word of God.

What are we to think of all this?

The appeal to mystery sounds very pious to most believers since Scripture also speaks of the mystery. But are these people following the Biblical concept of the “mystery” when they use the word to mean “contradiction” or “paradox?” Does the Bible in speaking of mysteries ever refer to doctrines that contradict each other and are impossible to understand? Can there be truths about God or Scripture teaching that contradict each other?

Along the same lines, does God’s incomprehensibility mean that we can believe contradictory things about Him? Is it, at least at times impossible to understand and make sense of what God says about Himself and about His Word? This would seem to be the conclusion of some of those who so often decry the use of logic and who hold to all sorts of contradictions in God and in Scripture—that rationality is incompatible with God’s incomprehensibility.

And finally, is it rationalism to insist that the doctrines of Scripture must be logically consistent with one another? This is the charge made against those who insist that the teachings of Scripture cannot contradict each other. Do they exalt logic over Scripture when they seek to harmonize the truths of Scripture and to fit them a logically coherent system? Many, of course, would claim that they do.

Thinking the logical way

Perhaps the reason why the appeal against logic is so successful is that the word conjures up in the mind of modern man, even of the Christian, a cold and barren system of doctrines that have no relationship to life and are utterly without passion or warmth. This view of logic, however, is wrong.

It helps to dispel these wrong notions to remember that we get the word “logic” from the Greek word “logos” translated “Word” in John 1:1-14, and used as a name for our Lord Jesus Christ. Nor is it any more strange to think of Christ in terms of logic than it is to think of Him in terms of the Word. To connect logos with speech or the spoken word is only to say that it is through Him that God speaks to us and reveals Himself to us. To connect logos with logic is only to say that when God speaks to us through His Son He speaks rationally and

intelligibly. That is, in fact, the miracle of revelation—not just that God speaks to us, but that we can understand what He says and make sense of it.

One may claim

When we accept the laws of logic, we are not accepting laws external to God to which he must be subject, but we are accepting laws of truth which are derived from God's holy character ... The Bible as a book written in human language claims to speak the truth. If the word truth is not meaningless, it implies the laws of truth, that is, the laws of logic.

We do not deny, of course, that an operation of the Spirit is necessary for natural man to understand what God says. The problem, however, with the unbeliever is not that what God says is unintelligible or irrational, but that natural man is a fool. He will not understand. He is a bit like a foreigner who pretends not to understand English in order to avoid an unpleasant confrontation with the authorities.

Logic is simply right thinking and the rules of logic the rules for right thinking. If we get that into our minds we will not think so disparagingly of logic. Surely God wants us to think rightly about Him, about right and wrong, and about all other things. And by the same token it must be sin to think wrongly about God, about His truth or about morality. To say that right is wrong or that wrong is right is a matter of wrong, sinful thinking (Isa. 5:20). Right thinking, at least about the things of God, is not only proper, it is required of us and all wrong thinking condemned (Ps. 50:21; Phil. 4:8).

Right thinking then, is thinking in harmony with all that the Word teaches. We must think what God thinks. We have His thoughts in the Word. And so, just as in confessing we say what he says, so in thinking we think what He reveals—His own thoughts (Ps. 10:4) We must therefore, bring “into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”(II Cor. 10:4).

Such right thinking, however, is rational and makes sense. Right thinking will not only be thinking that is based on the Word of God but thinking that is, therefore, intelligible and rational. Exactly because the “thoughts” of the Word are God's revelation they are not irrational, senseless, contradictory and impossible to understand.

We agree at this point

Does it not seem peculiar, in this connection, that a theologian can be so greatly attached to the doctrine of the Atonement, or a pietist to the idea of sanctification, which nonetheless is explained only in some parts of Scripture,

and yet be hostile to or suspicious of rationality and logic which every verse of Scripture exhibits?

Nor is it any help to sneer at “mere human arithmetic” as Gordon Clark suggests elsewhere when he asks, “Two plus two is four for man, but is it eleven for God?”

Rationalism and Rationality

All this leads us to another important point, a defence of rationality. Rationality is not the same as rationalism. When someone insists that it is a contradiction, impossible nonsense, to say that God wants and does not want the salvation of the reprobate, he is immediately charged with rationalism. But he is only being rational. That is something different. The thing that needs to be made clear is that it is not rationalism to be rational and to insist that the truth be rational and make sense. Rationalism is thinking that does not start with God and with Scripture and therefore always goes nowhere. It is in fact rationalism which has lead modern man to the brink of total irrationality and anarchy in philosophy, art, science and ethics. In severing his thinking from Scripture he has ended up with nonsense.

Francis Schaeffer says:

Christianity has the opportunity, therefore, to speak clearly of the fact that its answer has the very thing modern man has despaired of—the unity of thought. It provides a unified answer for the whole of life. It is true that man will have to renounce his rationalism, but then, on the basis of what can be discussed, he has the possibility of recovering his rationality. You may now see why I stressed so strongly, earlier, the difference between rationalism and Rationality. Modern man has lost the latter (*Escape from Reason*, p. 82).

When, therefore, a theologian seeks to think things through and to reconcile the teaching of Scripture with itself he is not being a rationalist. It is in fact the *task* of the theologian to systematize the truths of Scripture so that they all relate to one another and do not contradict each other. To throw out logic and rationality is to destroy even possibility of doing theology. Yet this is what many theologians insist must be done.

The question here, therefore, is not that of revelation versus rationalism but whether revelation is rational—whether, when God speaks, He speaks in contradictions and paradoxes, He speaks irrationally. A contradiction, i.e., that a square is round, is nonsense. Someone may believe it, but in that case they can well be accused of being irrational, even insane.

It is such contradictions that theologians defend when they say that God has two wills, that He wants and does not want to save all men, that He loves the unsaved and does not love them, or that in first loving them and then not loving them He remains unchangeable. To reject such contradiction is not rationalism, but rationality and a rejection of all irrationality.



The Beatitudes Church in Israel

The Mystery

It is at this point that the whole subject of the mystery arises. In defence of their contradictions theologians say, “It is a mystery.” To someone who has given the matter little thought, this seems very good. After all, the Bible speaks of mysteries, and in everyday usage of the word seems to mean “something we cannot understand.” So the theologian seems perfectly justified in using the word mystery to mean “something impossible to understand—a contradiction.”

However, that is not the biblical meaning of the word mystery. In Scripture the word means “something the natural man cannot understand because he is a fool, but which is revealed to God’s children by God himself and which can and must be *understood* by them.” Paul speaks in Ephesians 3:3-5 of the mystery “which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit.” Nor is this mystery understood only by the theologians and leaders like Paul, but was given so that “when ye [the ordinary members of the church] read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.”

Even in the common usage of the word, however, the theologians are wrong to stretch its meaning to cover their contradictions and paradoxes. When we speak of the doctrine of the Trinity as a mystery, we do not mean, in other words, that the doctrine of the Trinity is self-contradictory and irrational only that we do not fully understand it.

If the doctrine of the Trinity meant that God was one God and three Gods or one Person and three Persons (as Cornelius van Til says) it would be a contradiction and would be unintelligible. God cannot at the same time be one God and three Gods. But the Trinity means only that God is one God and three Persons. That maybe difficult to understand fully, but it is not a contradiction—not a mystery in the sense of contradiction.

Nor are the doctrines of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility a mystery in the sense that they contradict each other. If they did we would have to choose between them. Thankfully, we do not. They are a mystery in that we do not fully understand how they are reconciled, but they do not contradict each other. They are not a paradox. We agree, therefore, with Herman Hoeksema, who says,

They would be contradictory of the first proposition denied what is affirmed by the second. But this is not true. The first proposition asserts something about God: He is absolutely sovereign and determines the acts of man. The second proposition predicates something about man: he is responsible for his moral acts. Does the first proposition deny that man is responsible? If it does you have here a contradiction. But it does not. Those who like to discover a contradiction here, usually the enemies of the truth of God's sovereignty, simply take it for granted that to assert God is sovereign even over man's acts is to say the same as that man is not responsible .

To say that God loves and does not love the reprobate is not a mystery but a contradiction. It is impossible to make sense of the idea that God loves the reprobate for a while and then ceases to love them and yet remains unchangeable. It is such contradiction that we reject and that ought to be rejected in Reformed theology.

Logic and the Doctrine of God

There is more at stake here than just the question of whether or not we can believe contradictions, as many modern theologians say we can and ought. The very nature and being of God is at stake.

One very basic attribute of God is His simplicity, an attribute about which one usually hears little. The first article of the *Belgic Confession* lists this attribute first:

We all believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that there is one only *simple* and spiritual being, which we call God; and that he is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good and the overflowing fountain of all good.

But the attribute is so little known that the language of the *Belgic Confession* sounds strange to our ears.

God's simplicity means that He is undivided. This is true first in reference to the three Persons of the Trinity—that they are not separate gods but together one God. It is also true in connection with God's attributes. They cannot be divided from one another, or set one against another. There is, for example, no division or conflict between His justice and His mercy. His mercy will always be just and His justice merciful. There is, therefore, no contradiction or disharmony in God. He is one and undivided in His Person, in His attributes, in His purpose and will, and in His works. His works are never at odds with His purpose, nor His purpose with itself.

This attribute is denied by those who are willing to find contradiction in God's will or between God's will and His works. Not only do they promote irrationality, they deny His simplicity and are in conflict with what Scripture teaches about God (I John 1:5). To find contradictions in God is to deny God. There are many things about God we cannot fathom, many things we cannot fully understand, but there is no darkness in Him at all.

Logic and the Doctrine of Scripture

The "theology of paradox and contradiction" is also a denial of the doctrine of Scripture. If there is contradiction in Scripture, then Scripture is no longer revelation. A contradiction "reveals" nothing. It makes understanding and comprehension impossible. Nor, if Scripture has contradictions in it is it perfect and infallible. A contradiction, however one looks at it, is an imperfection, a mistake.

The *Regula Scripturae*, the rule of Scripture, one of the great Reformation principles, means that there is a consistent line of teaching that runs through Scripture from beginning to end. This, of course, follows from the fact that it is the Word of God. If it were just a series of books written by different men we would expect neither unity nor consistency, but because the Holy Spirit is author of Scripture, it has both unity and consistency in all that it says. That is implied in Jesus' words in John 10:35: "The Scriptures cannot be broken." To find in them contradictions, whether in what they say about God or in matters of historical detail, is to deny that that they are God's infallible Word.

This is not to say that we understand every passage of Scripture. There are certainly passages that are difficult for us to reconcile, but anyone who believes in the infallibility of Scripture would insist that then we simply do not understand. To admit that they really are contradictions is to say that there are mistakes in Scripture and that is to deny them their authority as the Word of God.

Logic and Neo-orthodoxy

What is most frightening, though, about the tendency to admit contradiction both in Scripture and in theology is that this is the very heart of neo-orthodoxy. The idea that faith is able to believe contradictions—that is the very essence of faith to believe unreasonable things—is the essence of Karl Barth’s paradox theology. He described faith as “a leap on the dark” insofar as it accepts all sorts of contradictions: God both elected and reprobated Esau (both loving and hating him); God elects and reprobates all men; God is omniscient (all-knowing) and yet limited in knowledge.

His followers went even further. Brunner flatly denied the infallibility of Scripture by teaching that the Bible is full of contradictions but that God can and does reveal Himself to us through these things. Theology, according to Brunner, is not concerned with rational intelligible truth, nor is the Bible a system of truth. According to him the contradictions and discrepancies in Scripture are a matter of God’s condescension to us and that the only important thing is to “encounter” God through the Scriptures, not to understand and believe them literally.

Many evangelicals today have taken this same view of faith, of Scripture and of God. They, too, say that Scripture does not have to be coherent and consistent in every part, that the knowledge of God can be full of paradoxes, antinomies and contradictions and that faith by its very nature is able to accept such contradiction and irrationality without question.

An example that comes to mind is that of the Reformed minister who tried to defend the well-meant offer of the Gospel and common grace by such an appeal to irrationality. He was trying to answer the charge that for God to show love and grace to the reprobate in natural gifts and in a well-meant offer of the Gospel makes God changeable, i.e. He loves them now and stops loving them when He sends them to Hell. In defending himself, this man said that God was unchangeable but as sovereign could nevertheless “decree for Himself a series of different dispositions.” In other words, though He is unchangeable, He could as sovereign decide that He would change His attitude toward the wicked reprobate. Put even more simply, he was saying that though God is unchangeable He can change.

Neo-orthodox Karl Barth put it this way:

We may believe that God can and must only be absolute in contrast to all that is relative ... but such beliefs are shown to be quite untenable and corrupt and pagan, by the fact that God does in fact be and do this in Jesus Christ. We cannot make them the standard by which to measure what God can or cannot do, or the basis of the judgement that in doing this He brings Himself into self-contradiction ... He is absolute, infinite, exalted, active, impassable, transcendent, but in all this He is the one who is free in His love and therefore not His own prisoner. He is all this as the Lord and in such a way *that He embraces the opposite of these concepts* (i.e., He is also relative, finite, passive, able to suffer and surpassed in glory) even while He is superior to them (*Church Dogmatics*, IV, i, 55, pp. 183ff; italics mine).

What is Barth saying? He is saying that God's freedom and sovereignty mean that He can be infinite and finite at the same time, exalted and inferior, omnipotent and impotent, immutable (unchangeable) and yet subject to change. Nor is Barth's reference to Jesus Christ anything but a smokescreen to obscure the fact that He is in fact denying God's absolute omnipotence, immutability and infinity. That Christ, in His human nature, was limited, changeable, finite and born in time, we do not deny. But that is not what Barth means. He means, as the first part of the quote shows, that it is pagan to think or say that God is absolutely and without qualification omnipotent, omniscient, immutable and infinite. He must also be impotent, limited in knowledge, mutable and finite.

If you object that his is blatant contradiction or paradox, Barth will most assuredly agree with you and tell you that is why it is a matter of faith—faith does not understand, but simply believes the irrational. That, unconsciously or otherwise, is the same conclusion to which many today in defending their paradoxes and antinomies.

Interestingly, Barth's conclusion regarding theology is: "It can never form a system, comprehending an as it were 'seizing' the object" (*Church Dogmatics*, II, 3, p. 293). This is simply to say that not only theology but that which it seeks, the knowledge of God, is impossible.

We do not deny then, that faith must often accept the fact that it does not fully understand. We only deny that faith is such a "leap in the dark" that it can accept nonsense and unreason. If God is God, if revelation is truly a revealing of God, and if Scripture is infallible and unbreakable, it cannot be so.

The Danger

The danger here is not small. In many ways, paradox theology strikes at the fundamentals. The idea that there can be contradictions in God and in Scripture and that faith can accept these contradictions opens the door to all the errors of the subjectivism with which the church is plagued today. By subjectivism we mean the teaching that feeling and experience are more important than doctrine and truth. “We must not argue for the truth or try to prove that it is correct,” so many say. We can only feel that it is correct and accept it blindly. To try and make sense of it, to do theology or to teach doctrine is to destroy all possibility of passion and love and to lapse into deadness. Our feelings and experiences may very well contradict Scripture but that does not make them wrong. Faith demands that we follow them even if they contradict Scripture.

In opposition to such error we set ourselves in opposition to all “theology” of paradox and contradiction, whether it is that of Barth, Niebuhr and Brunner, or that rather more ignorant version of the same that passes as evangelicalism today.



The Garden of Gethsemane

1. The Bible Does Not Need to Be Defended

One objection to apologetics often made is the claim that the Bible does not need to be defended; it simply needs to be expounded. Hebrews 4:12 is often cited as evidence: "The Word of God is alive and powerful..." (NIV). It is said that the Bible is like a lion; it does not need to be defended but simply let loose. A lion can defend itself. Several things should be noted in response.

First, this begs the question as to whether or not the Bible is the Word of God. Of course, God's Word is ultimate, and it speaks for itself. But how do we know the Bible is the Word of God, as opposed to the Qur'an, the Book of Mormon, or some other book? One must appeal to evidence to determine which of the many conflicting books really is the Word of God.

Second, no Christian would accept the claim of a Muslim without question that "the Qur'an is alive and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword...." We would demand evidence. Likewise, no non-Christian should accept our claim without evidence.

Third, the analogy of the lion is misleading. A roar of a lion speaks with authority only because we know from previous knowledge what a lion can do. Without the tales of woe about a lion's ferocity, its roar would not have the same authoritative effect on us. Likewise, without evidence to establish one's claim to authority, there is no good reason to accept that authority.

2. Jesus Refused to do Signs for Evil Men

Some argue that Jesus rebuked people who sought signs. Hence, we should be content simply to believe without evidence. Indeed, Jesus did on occasion rebuke sign seekers. He said, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign!" (Matt. 12:39 cf. Luke 16:31). However, this does not mean that Jesus did not desire people to look at the evidence before they believed for many reasons.

First, even in this very passage Jesus went on to offer the miracle of His resurrection as a sign of who He was, saying "But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah (Matt. 12:39-40). Likewise, Paul gave many evidences for the resurrection (in 1 Cor. 15). And Luke speaks of "many convincing proofs" (Acts 1:3) of the resurrection.

Second, when John the Baptist inquired whether He was the Christ, Jesus offered miracles as proof, saying: "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the

poor" (Matt. 11:5). When replying to the Scribes, He said: "'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.' He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home'" (Mark 2:10-11). Nicodemus said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no-one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him" (John 3:2).

Third, Jesus was opposed to sign-seeking or entertaining people by miracles. Indeed, He refused to perform a miracle to satisfy king Herod's curiosity (Luke 23:8). On other occasions He did not do miracles because of their unbelief (Matt. 13:58), not wishing to "cast pearls before swine." The purpose of Jesus' miracles was apologetic, namely, to confirm His message (cf. Ex. 4:1f; Jn. 3:2; Heb. 2:3-4). This He did in great abundance, for "Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him..." (Acts 2:22).

3. Paul Was Unsuccessful In His Use of Reason on Mars Hill and Later Discarded the Approach

Opponents of apologetics sometimes argue that Paul was unsuccessful in his attempt to reach the thinkers on Mars Hill (Acts 17), discarding the method and later telling the Corinthians that he wanted to "know Jesus and Him only" (1 Cor. 2:2). However, this interpretation is based on a misunderstanding of the text.

For one thing, Paul did have results on Mars Hill. For some people were saved, including a philosopher. The text says clearly "A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others" (Acts 17:34).

Second, nowhere in either Acts or 1 Corinthians does Paul indicate any repentance or even regret over what he did on Mars Hill. This is reading into the text what simply is not there.

Third, Paul's statement about preaching Jesus and Jesus only is not a change in the content of Paul's preaching. This is what he did everywhere. Even to the philosophers "he preached Jesus and the resurrection" (Acts 17:18 cf. v. 31). So there was nothing unique about what he preached; it was simply how he did it. Paul tailored his starting point to where the audience was. With the heathen at Lystra he began by an appeal to nature (Acts 14) and ended by preaching Jesus to them. With the Jews he began with the OT and moved on to Christ (Acts 17:2-3). But with the Greek thinkers Paul began with creation and reason to a Creator and on to His Son Jesus who died and rose again (Acts 17:24f).

4. Only Faith, not Reason, Can Please God

Heb. 11:6 insists that "without faith it is impossible to please God." This would seem to argue against the need for reason. In fact, it would appear that asking for reasons, rather than simply believing, would displease God. In response to this argument against apologetics two important points must be made.

First of all, the text does not say that with reason it is impossible to please God. It says without faith one cannot please God. It does not eliminate reason accompanying faith or a reasonable faith.

Second, God in fact calls upon us to use our reason (1 Pet. 3:15). Indeed, He has given "clear" (Rom. 1:20) and "convincing proofs" (Acts 1:3 NASB) so that we do not have to exercise blind faith.

Third, this text in Hebrews does not exclude "evidence" but actually implies it. For faith is said to be "the evidence" of things we do not see (Heb. 11:1 NKJV). For example, the evidence that someone is a reliable witness justifies my believing his testimony of what he saw and I did not. Even so, our faith in "things not seen" (Heb. 11:1 NKJV) is justified by the evidence we have that God does exist which is "clearly seen, being understood from what has been made" (Rom. 1:20).

5. Paul Said God Can't be Known by Human Reason when he wrote, "the world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor. 1:21 NKJV).

However, this cannot mean that there is no evidence for God's existence, since Paul declared in Romans that the evidence for God's existence is so "plain" as to render even the heathen "without excuse" (Rom. 1:19-20). Further, the context in 1 Corinthians is not God's existence but His plan of salvation through the cross. This cannot be known by mere human reason but only by divine revelation. It is "foolish" to the depraved human mind.

What is more, the "wisdom" of which he speaks is "the wisdom of this world" (v. 20), not the wisdom of God. Paul called a sophist the "disputer of this age" (v. 20). Sophist could argue for argument's sake. This leads no one to God. Further, Paul's reference to the world by wisdom not knowing God is not a reference to the inability of human beings to know God through the evidence He has revealed in creation (Rom. 1:19-20) and conscience (Rom. 2:12-15). Rather, it is a reference to man's depraved and foolish rejection of the message of the cross.

Finally, in this very book of 1 Corinthians Paul gives his greatest apologetic evidence for the Christian Faith--the eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Christ

which his companion Luke called "many convincing proofs" (Acts 1:3 NASB). Indeed, even though man knows clearly through human reason that God exists, nevertheless, he "suppresses" or "holds down" this truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18). Thus, it is the presence of such strong evidence that leaves him "without excuse" (Rom. 1:20).

6. The Natural Man Can't Understand Spiritual Truths

Paul insisted that "the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God..." (1 Cor. 2:14). They cannot even "know" them. What use, then, is apologetics? In response to this argument against apologetics two things should be observed.

First, Paul does not say that natural persons cannot **perceive** truth about God, but only that they do not *receive* it (Gk: *dekomai*, welcome). Indeed, Paul emphatically declared that the basic truths about God are "clearly seen" (Rom. 1:20). The problem is not that unbelievers are not aware of God's existence but that they do not want to accept Him because of the moral consequences this would have on their sinful lives.

Second, 1 Cor. 2:14 says they do not "know" (Gk: *ginosko*) which can mean to know by experience. In other words, they know God in their mind (Rom. 1:19-20) but they have not accepted Him in their heart (Rom. 1:18). The Bible says, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psa. 14:1).

7. Only the Holy Spirit Can Bring Someone to Christ

The Bible says that salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit. He alone can convict, convince, and convert (John 16:8; Eph. 2:1; Titus 3:5-7). This is certainly true, and no orthodox Christian denies this. However, two things must be kept in mind.

First, the Bible does not teach that the Holy Spirit will always do this apart from reason and evidence. It is not either the Holy Spirit or Reason. Rather, it is the reasonable Holy Spirit using good reason to reach rational people. God is always the efficient cause of salvation, but apologetic arguments can be an instrumental cause used by the Holy Spirit to bring one to Christ.

Second, apologists do not believe that apologetics saves anyone. It only provides evidence in the light of which people can make rational decisions. It only provides evidence that Christianity is true. One must still place his faith in Christ in order to be saved. Apologetics only leads the "horse" to the water. Only the Holy Spirit can persuade him drink.

8. Apologetics is not Used in the Bible

It is objected that if apologetics is biblical, then why don't we see it done in the Bible? There are two basic reasons for this misunderstanding.

First, by and large the Bible was not written for unbelievers but for believers. Since they already believe in God, Christ, etc., they are already convinced these are true. Hence, apologetics is directed primarily for those who do not believe so that they may have a reason to believe.

Second, contrary to the claim of critics, apologetics is used in the Bible. 1) The first chapter of Genesis confronts the mythical accounts of creation known in that day. 2) Moses' miracles in Egypt were an apologetic that God was speaking through him (Ex. 4:1-9). 3) Elijah did apologetics on Mt. Carmel when he proved miraculously that Yahweh is the true God, not Baal (1 Kings 18). 4) As we have shown in detail elsewhere, Jesus was constantly engaged in apologetics, proving by signs and wonders that He was the Son of God (John 3:2; Acts 2:22). 5) The Apostle Paul did apologetics at Lystra when he gave evidence from nature to the heathen that the supreme God of the universe existed and that idolatry was wrong (Acts 14). 6) The classic case of apologetics in the NT is Acts 17 where Paul reasoned with the philosophers on Mars Hill. He not only presented evidence from nature that God existed but also from history that Christ was the Son of God. Indeed, he cited pagan thinkers in support of his arguments.

B. Objections to Apologetics from Outside the Bible

These objections against apologetics are geared to show either its irrationality, inadequacy, or fruitlessness. Many come from a rationalistic or sceptical point of view. Others are fideistic which denies reason should be used to support ones faith.

1. Human Reason Can't Tell Us Anything About God. Some critics assert that human reason cannot give us any information about God.

First, it says that reason doesn't apply to questions about God. But this statement itself is offered as a reasonable statement about the issue of God. In order to say that reason doesn't apply to God, one has to apply reason to God in that very statement. So reasoning about God is inescapable. Reason cannot be denied without being employed.

Second, purely hypothetical reason itself does not tell us anything exists, including God. But since something undeniably exists (e.g., I do), then reason can tell us much about existence, including God. For instance, if something

finite and contingent exists, then something infinite and necessary must exist (i.e., God). And if God exists, then it is false that He does not exist. And if God is a necessary Being, then He cannot not exist. Further, if God is Creator and we are creatures, then we are not God. Likewise, reason informs us that if God is omnipotent, then He cannot make a stone so heavy that He cannot lift it. For whatever He can make, He can lift.

2. Reason is Useless in Religious Matters

Fideism argues that reason is of no use in matters that deal with God. One must simply believe. Faith, not reason, is what God requires (Heb. 11:6). In response to this several points can be made.

First, even from a biblical point of view God calls on us to use our reason (Isa. 1:18; 1 Pet. 3:15; Matt. 22:36-37). God is a rational being, and He created us as rational beings. God would not insult the reason He gave us by asking us to ignore it in such important matters as our beliefs about Him.

Second, this position is fideistic and is self-defeating. For either it has a reason that we should not reason about God or it does not. If it does, then it defeats itself by using reason to say we should not use reason. If fideism has no reason for not using reason, then it is without reason for its position, in which case there is no reason why one should accept fideism.

Furthermore, to claim reason is just optional for a fideist will not suffice. For either the fideist offers some criteria for when we should be reasonable and when we should not, or else his view is simply arbitrary. If he offers some rational criteria for when we should be rational, then he does have a rational basis for his view, in which case he is not really a fideist after all. Reason is not the kind of thing in which a rational creature can choose to participate. By virtue of being rational by nature one must be part of rational discourse. And rational discourse demands that one follow the laws of reason.

A major contribution made by the late Francis Schaeffer was his emphasis on the need for a reasoned approach to apologetics. In his *Escape from Reason* he showed the futility of those who attempt to reject reason. He constantly chided those who make a “dichotomy between reason and non-reason.” He also criticizes those who forsake reason for a “lower story” materialism or an “upper story” mysticism.

3. You Can't Prove God or Christianity by Reason

According to this objection, the existence of God cannot be proven by human reason. The answer depends on what is meant by "prove."

First, if "prove" means to demonstrate with mathematical certainty, then most theists would agree that God's existence cannot be proven in this way. The reason for this is because mathematical certainty deals only with the abstract, and the existence of God (or anything else) is a matter of concrete, real existence. Mathematical certainty is based on certain axioms or postulates that must be assumed in order to get a necessary conclusion. But if God's existence must be assumed in order to be proven, then the conclusion that God exists is only based on the assumption that He exists, in which case it is not really a proof at all. Mathematical certainty is deductive in nature. It argues from given premises. But one cannot validly conclude what is not already implied in the premise(s). In this case one would have to assume God exists in the premise in order to validly infer this in the conclusion. But this begs the question.

Second, if by "prove," however, we mean "give adequate evidence for" or "provide good reasons for," then it would seem to follow that one can prove the existence of God and the truth of Christianity. Indeed, many apologists have offered such proofs and people have become Christians after reading their writings.

4. No One is Persuaded of Religious Truths by Reason

According to this argument, no one is ever persuaded to accept a religious truth by reason. Psychological, personal, and subjective factors prompt religious decisions, not rational arguments. But this objection is patently false for many reasons.

First of all, whoever became a believer because he thought it was irrational and absurd to do so. Certainly, the vast majority of people who believe in God or accept Christ do so because they think it is reasonable.

Second, this objection confuses two kinds of belief: belief **in** and belief **that**. Certainly, religious belief in God and in Christ is not based on evidence and reason. But neither is it done without them. Every rational person looks to see if there is evidence that the elevator has a floor before he steps in it. Likewise, all rational people want evidence that an airplane can fly before they get in it. So belief **that** is prior to belief **in**. Apologetics deals with the former. It provides evidence that God exists, that Christ is the Son of God, and that the Bible is the Word of God. A religious decision is a step of faith in the light of the evidence, not a leap of faith in the dark--in the absence of evidence.



Jerusalem from Mount of Olives

II. The Reasons for the Need to Defend the Faith

There are many good reasons for doing apologetics. First of all, God commands us to do so. Second, reason demands it. Third, the world needs it. Fourth, results confirm it.

A. God Commands the Use of Reason

The most important reason for doing apologetics is that God told us to do it. Over and over the New Testament exhorts us to defend the Faith. 1 Peter 3:15 says, "But in your hearts acknowledge Christ as the holy Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to every one who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." This verse says several important things. First, it says that we should be ready. We may never run across someone who asks the tough questions about our faith, but we should still be ready just in case. But being ready is not just a matter of having the right information available, it is also an attitude of readiness and eagerness to share with others the truth of what we believe.

Second, we are to give a reason to those who ask the questions (cf. Col. 4:5-6). It is not expected that everyone needs pre-evangelism, but when they do need it, we must be able and willing to give them an answer.

Finally, it links doing pre-evangelism with making Christ Lord in our hearts. If He is really Lord, then we should be obedient to Him by "destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and ... taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). In other words we should be confronting issues in our own minds and in the expressed thoughts of others that are preventing them from knowing God. That is what apologetics is all about.

In Philippians 1:7 speaks of his mission as one of "defending and confirming the gospel." He added in verse 16, "I am put here for the defense of the gospel" (Phil 1:16). And we are put where we are to defend it as well.

Jude 3 declares: "Beloved, while making every effort to write to you about our common salvation, I felt it necessary to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith once for all given over to the saints." The people Jude was writing to had been assaulted by false teachers and he needed to encourage them to protect (literally agonize for) the faith as it had been revealed through Christ. Jude makes a significant statement about our attitude as we do this in verse 22 when he says, "have mercy on some, who are doubting." Apologetics, then, is a form of compassion.

Titus 1:9 makes knowledge of Christian evidences a requirement for church leadership. An elder in the church should be "holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."

In 2 Timothy 2:24-25 Paul declares that "the Lord's bondservant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth." Anyone attempting to answer the questions of unbelievers will surely be wronged and be tempted to lose patience, but our ultimate goal is that they might come to a knowledge of the truth that Jesus has died for their sins.

Indeed, the command to use reason is part of the greatest command. For Jesus said, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment" (Matt. 22:37-38).

B. Reason Demands It

God created us with human reason. It is part of His image in us (Gen. 1:27 cf. Col. 3:10). Indeed, it is that by which we are distinguished from "brute beasts" (Jude 10). God calls upon us to use our reason (Isa. 1:18) to discern truth from

error (1 John 4:6); to determine right from wrong (Heb. 5:14), and to discern a true from a false prophet (Deut. 18:19-22).

A fundamental principle of reason is that we should have sufficient grounds for what we believe. An unjustified belief is just that--unjustified. Being created rational creatures and not "unreasoning animals" (Jude 10 NASB), we are expected to use the reason God gave us. Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." Likewise, the unexamined faith is not worth having. Therefore, it is incumbent upon Christians "to give a reason for their hope" (1 Pet. 3:15). This is part of the great command to love God with all our mind, as well as our heart and soul (Matt. 22:36-37).

C. The World Needs It

Many people refuse to believe without some evidence, as indeed they should. Since God created us as rational beings He does not expect us to live irrationally. He wants us to look before we leap. This does not mean there is no room for faith. But God wants us to take a step of faith in the light--in the light of evidence. He does not want us to leap in the dark.

We should have evidence that something is true before we place our faith in it. For example, no rational person steps in an elevator unless he has some reason to believe it will hold him up. Likewise, no reasonable person gets on an airplane that has a broken wing and smoke coming out the tail end. Belief **that** is prior to belief **in**. Evidence and reason is important to establish belief **that**. Once this is established, one can place his faith in it. Thus, the rational person will want some evidence that God exists before he places his faith in God. Likewise, rational unbelievers will want evidence for the claim that Jesus is the Son of God before they place their trust in Him.

D. Results Confirm It

There is a common misnomer among many Christians that apologetics never helps to bring anyone to Christ. This is a serious misrepresentation of the facts.

1. The Conversion of St. Augustine

There were several significant rational turning points in Augustine's life before he came to Christ. First, he reasoned his way out of Manichaeism. One significant turning point here was the success of a young Christian debater of Manicheans called Helpidius.

Second, Augustine reasoned his way out of total skepticism by seeing the self-defeating nature of it.

Third, were it not for studying Plotinus, Augustine informs us that he would not even been able to conceive of a spiritual being, let alone believe in one.

2. The Conversion of Frank Morrison

This sceptical attorney set out to disprove Christianity by showing the resurrection never occurred. The quest ended with his conversion and a book titled *Who Moved the Stone?* in which the first chapter was titled "The Book That Refused to be Written"! More recently another unbelieving attorney had a similar journey.

3. The Conversion of Simon Greenleaf

At the turn of the century the Professor of Law at Harvard, who wrote the book on legal evidence, was challenged by students to apply the rules of legal evidence to the New Testament to see if its testimony would stand up in court. The result was a book titled *The Testimony of the Evangelists* in which he expresses his confidence in the basic documents and truths of the Christian Faith.

4. The Results of Debates

Many people have been led toward or to Christianity as a result of debates we have had with atheists and skeptics. After debating Berkley University philosopher Michael Scriven on "Is Christianity Credible?" the University of Calgary audience voted three to one in favor of Christianity. The campus news paper report read: "Atheist Fails to Convert Campus Christians!" Following a debate on the rationality of belief in Christianity with the head of the philosophy department at the University of Miami, the Christian student leadership held a follow-up meeting. The atheist professor attended and expressed doubts about his view expressed at the debate. It was reported that some 14 people who had attended the debate made decisions for Christ.

After a debate on the Moonie religion at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, a Moonie girl asked some questions about Christianity. I could see that she had been convinced that the Unification Church was not teaching the truth. After talking with her briefly, I introduced her to a female seminary student who led her to Christ.

When sharing the gospel with Don Bly, he informed us that he was an atheist. After reasoning with him from atheism to open-minded agnosticism, he agreed to read Frank Morrison's book. The evidence for Christ's resurrection convinced him and we had the privilege of leading him to Christ. He has subsequently raised his family for Christ became a leader in a church south of St. Louis.

5. The Results of Reading Apologetic Writings

I have received a number of letters and reports of people who have been converted to belief that God exists or to belief in Christ after reading *Apologetics works*. God used its arguments as an instrument to bring people toward and to Christ.

The world's most notorious atheist wrote, "Nor do I claim to have had any personal experience of God or any experience that may be called super- natural or miraculous. In short, my discovery of the divine has been a pilgrimage of reason and not of faith."

Noted former atheist Francis Collins said, "After twenty eight years as a believer, the Moral Law still stands out for me as the strongest signpost to God. More than that, it points to a God who cares about human beings, and a God who is infinitely good and holy."

A college student wrote, "God sent me your book 'I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist'.... I opened the book thinking I would rip it apart with my superior viewpoint and about one quarter of the way through I ended up apologizing to God and accepting him into my heart. I have since grown exponentially in Christ, and I thought I would thank you for your inspiring book."

"I just got done reading *Why I Am a Christian*, and I was blown away. It is perhaps the most powerful and influential Christian book I've ever read. It was exactly what I was looking for. It provided the answers to the roadblocks that were guarding against my faith.... Your book pressed the red button setting off the nuclear bomb of my faith."

Ministerial Education

At one time we are told that our version of the scriptures is so imperfect, that a thorough knowledge of the original text is indispensably necessary in order to produce unanimity of sentiment; and to know the original text we must of course understand the languages in which they were at first written, to wit: the Hebrew and the Greek: and not infrequently in the same treatise we are told that they have to contend with learned critics, and therefore we must meet them Greek to Greek, and Hebrew to Hebrew, or we cannot do them battle. Now both of these arguments cannot be good for the purposes intended, even if either or both of them could be established in point of truth: but we propose to show that neither of these positions are tenable. A collegiate or classical education never has led to unanimity of sentiment, or we should not find, as now we do, giants of literature distributed among almost every religious sect in existence. So far to the reverse

of this, there are very few religious sects, heresies, or speculations, which may not be traced back to some profoundly learned man. We might here name a catalogue of them, such as Luther, Calvin Cromwell, Wesley, Priestly Gill, Fuller, &c. Why so much discord among these worldly wise men if much learning tends to unanimity? If a thorough knowledge of the original language in which the scriptures were written, will enable men more readily to understand these scriptures, why were not the Jews, who understood their own language, the first to understand what the prophets had written? And why was the gospel, as preached by Paul and his brethren in the primitive church, foolishness to the Greeks? The truth is, the gospel of Jesus Christ is, at this day, as great a stumbling block, and as great foolishness to our Hebrew and Greek scholars, generally speaking, as it was in the apostolic day to the Jews and Greeks; because it has seemed good, in the sight of God, to hide these things from the wise and prudent, and to reveal them unto babes. No man can therefore admit that the scriptures are truth, without denying that human wisdom or education can assist its possessors to understand, from the scriptures, the things of the Spirit; things which can be known only as they are spiritually understood, by a spiritual people, or a people born of the Spirit of God.

Neither is human erudition the armor in which the battles of the Lord are to be fought; for then would God have chosen the mighty, the learned, the wise, the noble, and the great; but this the apostle expressly declares was not the case. Paul was himself a learned man, but his learning did not make him acquainted with the spirituality of the scriptures, for he was not taught it but by revelation. When it pleased God, who separated him from his mother's womb, to reveal his Son in him, straightway he conferred not with flesh and blood; and his speech and his preaching was not in the language which man's wisdom teacheth; that the faith -of his brethren should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Examine the history of the church of God in all ages of the world, and tell us, if it be true, that the cause of truth has been defended by the learned and wise of this world. In what college did Moses, and Aaron, and Joshua, and Sampson, and Gideon, and Daniel graduate? What were the classics of David and of all the prophets of our God? In what seminary did John the Baptist study Latin and Greek; and what human training caused him to leap at the salutation of the Virgin Mary? What was the education of the apostles of the Lamb of God? In what chapter of holy writ are we informed, that, when the foes of Zion perceived that the apostles were learned men, they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus? So far as divine revelation extends, the testimony of Paul is sustained, that God has chosen the foolish and weak things of this world, to confound the wise. This was not from necessity, but choice: for God was as able, if it had been his pleasure, to call learned men as fools to the work; but that

would not show that the excellency of the cause was of God. A bad cause may often be made to appear very plausible when defended by the eloquence and the talent of the learned and the mighty; but when the learned and the mighty are driven from the field by the unlearned, the artless and the simple, the excellency of the cause is made more prominently to appear.

Now let us review the retrospect we have taken of the history of the children of God, and inquire who have uniformly been the enemies of the truth of God? On this branch of sacred history, let the modern disciples of Gamaliel feast their vanity. All the magicians who opposed the word of the Lord by Moses were learned men! All the astrologers: and soothsayers of Babylon were men of education! All the prophets who were fed at Jezebel's table were learned at the expense of the crown. The scribes, the Pharisees, and Sadducees, who constantly opposed and persecuted the Son of God, were all learned men. Pilate, who condemned to be cruelly scourged, insulted, and crucified, one in whom he could find no guile, was able to write a superscription to, place above the head of Zion's King, in Hebrew, Latin and in Greek, where human literature, when religiously employed is generally placed. An orator of distinguished talent was, hired to impeach an apostle of the Lord Jesus, before Felix, the Roman governor, and learned men have flourished among the principal Pagan, Papal, and Protestant persecutors of the people of God, from that time to the present. In what part of divine revelation is the church of God taught to trust the defence of the cause to the learning and the talent of men? Is it where God has said, 11 Cursed is man that trusteth in man, or maketh flesh his arm? The people of God shall dwell as towns without walls; for God himself shall be a wall of fire round about them, and the, glory in their midst. And is not our God a sufficient Refuge for his people? He is our Shield, our Defense, our Strong Tower, and our Avenger. Are we not safe without the armour of Saul? "Walk about Zion, tell her towers, consider her palaces, and mark well her bulwarks, that ye may tell it to the generations to come." He is indeed our Hiding Place, our Covert from the storm, and he is unto us as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The place of Zion's defence is the invincible munitions of rocks; the Eternal God is her Refuge, and underneath are, the everlasting arms. He rideth upon the heavens in her help, and in his excellency on the sky. Who is like unto thee, O Israel, a people saved by the Lord?

But it is said, "When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war." The perversion of this motto, from its original application to Grecian chivalry, to make it apply to the lily fingered and effeminate production of modern academies and colleges is no greater than the perversions which such writers usually make of the scriptures when they take occasion to refer to them. It would be curious enough to witness the tug of war when the aristocracy of religious learning compare their notes. How often they have been called into the field like

horses trained for the turf, or like game cocks, to contend for some premium offered for a tract. There have we seen Greek to Greek, and there the tug of war. Greek has met Greek at the Congress Hall, at the commencement of almost every session to contend for the chaplaincy, and there have we witnessed the tug of war. Where rich congregations, splendid meeting houses, and heavy salaries have been in the market, there has been a tug of war; there Greek and Greek have dressed themselves (not in thunder, but) in smoke, and fought with zeal worthy of a nobler cause. High offices of honor, trust, and emolument, in voluntary religious associations, fat missionary fields, and lucrative agencies have often brought Greek to Greek and there has been the tug of war.

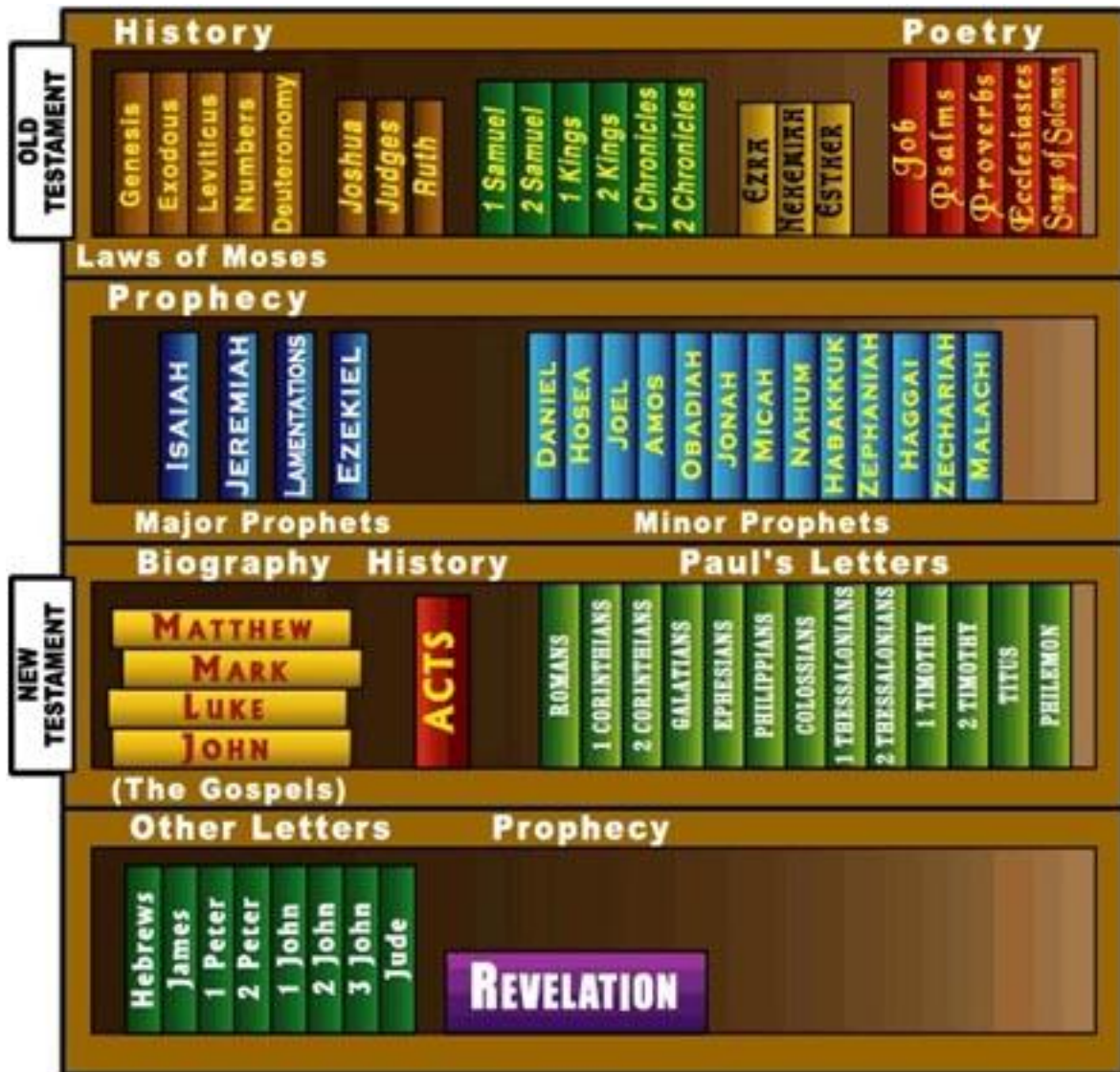
But when have men, distinguished for their literary attainments, been assembled for the defence of the doctrine of divine sovereignty, against the attacks of Arminian work-mongers? When and where have they ever been known to advocate unpopular truth against popular error? Reader, have you ever seen the powers of darkness rally against the little flock of Jesus? Have you seen them in deadly strife? Then have you marked on the part of Apollyon a collection of wealth, talent and learning; and on the part of Zion, the poor, the obscure, the unlearned, and the unpopular. On the one side you have seen the Davids, and the Goliaths on the other. Those on the one side boasting in human power, and ability, and learning, and those of the other, discarding all confidence in the flesh, and in the name of their God, setting up their banner. The help which the church of God derives from State Conventions, Education Societies, and other humanly devised worldly religious institutions, is very similar to the aid which the cause of truth has been favoured with by popish inquisitions, racks, tortures, gibbets, flames and fagots, for the extermination of heretics and heresy. From all such helps every devoted soul shall pray, " Lord, deliver us." In reference to the pretended object of the Michigan Baptist State Convention, in calling for money to make Greeks of those agonizing young men whom, they say, are panting to do good, and whose souls burn within them to preach the gospel, and who are so inflammable and likely to be burnt Lip, as to extort from the convention the pathetic cry, " Brethren shall we let the internal fires consume them?" In reference, we say, to the object of the convention it is the most flimsy and hypocritical that we have ever heard of, viz: to defend the Baptist denomination from the learned trickery of the Pedo Baptists, and thus to keep up our denominational distinction, etc. Is there a rational being in our country who does not know that the greatest pretenders to learning among the Baptists, are invariably among the very first to join affinity with the leading spirits of antagonistical denominations? Are not the leading actors in all the worldly institutions of our times, such as National Bible, Missionary, Tract, Sabbath School, Abolition and Total Abstinence Societies, in which the various ring-streaked and speckled professed denominations are united with the world, educated men? Do not those Baptist preachers who have learned the science at

college, interchange with preachers of the Methodists, Presbyterians, and other opposite denominations, following around, and hailing them as brethren, and paying more respect to one of them than to a dozen of the poor brethren of the Baptist order? It cannot be denied; and yet they have the effrontery to ask us to educate their beneficiaries, in order to defend the distinguishing points on which we differ from our neighbours. Who by learning the Latin or Greek language can better understand that Christ's kingdom is not of this world, and that the subjects of his government are required to become a separate and distinct people? Who that has been taught of God, and can read the English version of the New Testament, needs a Greek Lexicon to define the language that enjoins on all who love our Lord, to follow him in baptism? Our version of the scriptures has been scrutinized by the best linguists of all the conflicting denominations, and the result of all their criticisms is before us, in plain English. Where then is the necessity of spending our time and the people's money, to acquire a knowledge of the dead languages? If these sprigs of scholastic divinity, who study the science of sermonizing at colleges and theological schools, were qualified to do all their preaching in the Greek language, their hearers generally would not be profited by it. It is all a mistake to suppose that the defence of gospel truth, gospel rites or ordinances, requires any other ability than that which God giveth. We have men enough among us who have never seen the interior of a college, who, with the scriptures in their hand, and the grace of God in their hearts, could set the world on fire, while one of our college-bred dandies would be lighting his match. It is a gross impeachment of the wisdom of God, to say that those whom he has called, to the work, need to be trained by the wisdom of men, for the work whereunto he has called them. It is his exclusive province to call and to qualify whom he pleases and as he pleases; and all whom he has thus designated are required to preach as with the ability he giveth. How presumptuous, heaven daring, and insulting to the divine majesty for man, in the pride of his vain heart, to attempt to improve what God has done. May not the works of God, in creation and providence, be as easily improved as his works of grace? Why not, then, try the powers of human sufficiency upon the natural heavens, polish the sun, hang out a greater number of stars, forbid the waning of the moon, and increase her lustre until her radiance shall surpass the brightness of the sun, as far as it is supposed the wisdom of men excels the wisdom of our God? Why not improve the fixed laws of nature, annihilate the covenant which God has made with day and night,

Conclusion

Christianity is under attack today and must be defended against attacks from within by cults and heresies and from without by sceptics and other religions. We have a reasonable Faith, and the Bible has commanded that we give reasons for it. As perhaps the greatest apologist of the twentieth century, C. S. Lewis,

said: "To be ignorant and simple now--not to be able to meet the enemies on their ground--would be to throw down our weapons, and to betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen. Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered." The reason we need to defend the true religion is because there are false religions. The reason we need to stand for authentic Christianity is that there are counterfeit forms of Christianity.



The Biblical Canon

Where did the Bible come from? How can we be sure it is valid? What is the Apocrypha? How was it translated into English? What are the different translations? Are the translations correct? A biblical canon is a list of books considered to be authoritative as true scripture. The word "canon" comes from the Greek word **kanon**, meaning "rule." The Bible was written by 40 different

authors, over a period of 1600 years, in 3 separate continents. In this article, we will discuss how this took place, and how the biblical canon evolved over time to what it is today.



The Old Testament

The first known instance of God's Word being written down was when God wrote the Ten Commandments down on stone tablets on the top of Mount Sinai in the presence of Moses. This was most likely done in an ancient form of Hebrew and occurred around 1500 B.C. Later in his life, Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy; also in Hebrew. These five books are known as the "Pentateuch" or the "Torah."

Who wrote the rest of the books? The book of Joshua was probably written by Joshua for the most part. Some argue that Samuel wrote the last portion of Joshua. Samuel also most likely wrote Judges and Ruth. 1st and 2nd Samuel were probably written by Samuel with additions by Gad and Nathan. 1st and 2nd Kings were likely written by Jeremiah. 1st Chronicles, 2nd Chronicles, and Ezra were probably written by Ezra. Nehemiah wrote Nehemiah. Esther was likely written by Mordecai.

One book whose origin we are unsure of is the book of Job. Although we know the story probably took place around 2000 B.C., the author and the date it was written are unknown. It could have Moses, Solomon, David, Isaiah, Hezekiah, or even Job himself. Also, the introduction and conclusion of the book are

written differently than the rest of the book, meaning that they might have been added at a later time.

King David wrote more than half of Psalms. The rest was split between the sons of Korah, Asaph, Herman, Ethan, Hezekiah, and Solomon. The first 29 chapters of Proverbs were written by Solomon, while Agur wrote chapter 30, and Lemuel wrote chapter 31. Solomon also wrote Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon. Isaiah wrote Isaiah. Jeremiah wrote Jeremiah and Lamentations. Finally, the prophets Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi all wrote their own books.

All of the books of the Old Testament were written down on scrolls, which were usually made from sheep, and sometimes deer or cow. So for over a thousand years, the scrolls were passed down from generation to generation and were rewritten by Jewish scribes. The scribes were perfectionists when it came to copying. One wrong letter would result in rewriting several columns of text, similar to the more modern typewriter. By around 500 B.C., the Old Testament was completed.

How do we know that these Old Testament writings actually occurred so long ago? There are many reasons and arguments that can help prove the validity of the Bible, but here I only want to talk about the manuscripts. Biblical manuscripts are basically documents that contain parts of the Bible written on ancient scrolls, which we have in our possession today. The most notable of these manuscripts is the Dead Sea Scrolls which are a group of over 900 documents found between 1947 and 1956 in eleven caves on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. These scrolls date from 200 B.C. to 70 A.D. They contain the entire book of Isaiah, as well as portions of every other Old Testament book but Esther. In September 2011, five of the major Dead Sea Scrolls were made available in super high definition photographs online for the public for free here: [Digital Dead Sea Scrolls](#). This was made possible with the partnership of the Israel Museum and Google. Other manuscripts that are still in existence of the Old Testament include the Geniza Fragments, the Ben Asher Manuscripts, the Aleppo Codex, and the Codex Leningradensis.

The Apocrypha

Next came the writing of the Apocrypha, which comes from the Greek word **apokryfos**, meaning hidden. These are the group of books that Catholics and Christians consider to have questionable authority, which were originally written in Greek. These include Baruch, Sirach, 1st and 2nd Esdras, Judith, 1st and 2nd Maccabees, Prayer of Manasseh, Tobit, Wisdom of Solomon, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Azariah, and the rest of Esther. For a long time, they were considered to be part of the Bible. We will come back to this later.



Ἡ ΚΑΙΝΗ ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ: Novum Testamentum. Cantabrigiae: Apud Tho. Buck, 1632. Octavo. The second Cambridge Greek Testament is only the fifth Greek Testament printed in England. The first Testament was done in 1587, and the first Cambridge Greek Testament was printed in 1625. The text of the pictured Bible is reprinted from the first Elzevir Greek Testament of 1624. On the fanned pages to the right one may see an 18th century fore-edge painting depicting the Cathedral at Hereford. When closed, the gilt edges of the pages conceals the painting. The pictured copy is open to the first chapter of the Gospel according to Mark.

The New Testament

The New Testament was written in Greek on papyrus, which is a thick paper-like material made from a reed-like plant. The Greek word **biblos**, which refers to the inner bark of the papyrus plant is where we get the English words for bibliography and Bible. It was written from around 49 A.D. to 99 A.D.

The first four books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were self-written by Jesus' disciples who followed Jesus everywhere. They are known collectively as "The Gospels." Luke also wrote the book of Acts. John also wrote 1st John, 2nd John, 3rd John, and Revelation. Paul wrote Acts,

Romans, 1st Corinthians, 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st Thessalonians, 2nd Thessalonians, 1st Timothy, 2nd Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and probably Hebrews. James, the half brother of Jesus wrote James. Peter wrote 1st and 2nd Peter. Jude, another half brother of Jesus, wrote Jude.

There are over 5,600 manuscripts to prove that the New Testament is valid, all written on the original papyrus. The oldest ones date around 125 A.D. which is only 35 years after the originals. This is more copies of any ancient book that we have. We have 643 copies of Homer's Iliad, 49 copies of Aristotle's writings, 10 from Julius Caesar, and only 7 from Plato. It is strange that people take some of these ancient philosophers more seriously than the Bible, when the Bible has so much more physical evidence to back it up. Here are some of the major groups of manuscripts:

- **Bodmer Papyri** – contains Luke and John, discovered in Egypt in 1952
- **Chester Beatty Papyri** – contains Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews, discovered in the 1930s
- **Codex Alexandrius** – contains most of the New Testament, currently in the British Museum Library
- **Codex Sinaticus** – contains the entire Old and New Testaments in Greek, was discovered in 1856 by Tischendorf at Mt. Sinai, currently in the British Museum Library
- **Codex Vaticanus** – contains almost the complete New Testament, currently in the Vatican Library

Jewish Canon

Also around this time, a group of people did not believe that the New Testament should be authoritative. They did not believe that Jesus Christ was God, and hence began the religion of Judaism. So, they split off from Christianity and had their own Bible called the Tanakh, which only contains the Old Testament. In the Tanakh, the books are counted differently, and are in different order. This occurred sometime between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D.

The Dark Ages

In the second century, there were early translations of the Bible into Latin, Syriac, and Coptic. By 500 A.D. the Bible had been translated into 500

languages! However around 600 A.D., a law was passed that only allowed **Jerome's Latin Vulgate**. Possession of any other translation would result in execution. This was done by the Roman Catholic Church to give them power. During this time, only the high priests could read Latin, so no common person could question the Church. So all of the Church's "Biblical teachings" were to be accepted as fact. This led to a period known as the dark ages, because people's knowledge about the Bible was limited for the next 900 years.

During the dark ages, many Christian concepts were twisted in favor of the Catholic Church gaining power. The first major twist was the translation of Jerome's Latin Vulgate itself. Although it was translated from the original Greek and Hebrew, Jerome did not do a good job in his translation. As I mentioned in other articles, he translated the words *aion* and *olam* which both mean "a period of time" into either *speculum* or *aeternum* in Latin. These words both have double meanings: "unending time" and "a period of time." This is why many English translations say "for ever" or "everlasting" instead of an "age." This was then reinforced by the Church leader St. Augustine as well as Leo I, leading to the false concept of an "eternal hell."

Another twisted concept was the sacrament of penance. This was a practice to extort money from the people. The Church offered forgiveness of sins for a small amount of money. For a little more, you would be allowed to "indulge" in sins, such as keeping a mistress. For a large sum, you could save a loved one from Purgatory. Purgatory is an invention and has no Biblical basis. For more on the Catholic Church, see *Catholicism*.

The Protestant Reformation

The Dark Ages came to an end with the Protestant Reformation. In the 1380s, John Wycliffe translated the first hand-written English Bible from Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Wycliffe opposed the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and he became well known throughout Europe. In the 1450s, Johann Gutenberg invented the printing press, as well as the **Gutenberg Bible**, which was another Latin translation. The printing press allowed the Bible to be produced in large quantities and reach many common people in a short period of time.

In 1517, Martin Luther released *The Ninety-Five Theses*, which is a paper of 95 statements of the Christian faith. Many of these statements opposed the Catholic Church, which triggered the official beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Later, Luther translated the Bible into German, which spread the Christian faith even further.

In 1525, William Tyndale was the first man to print the New Testament in English. Tyndale was a theologian and a scholar who held views that were

considered heretical. **The Tyndale New Testament** was banned by the authorities and he was burned at the stake in 1536, by the authority of Henry VIII and the Episcopalian Church. The Church claimed there were thousands of errors in his translation, but in reality they couldn't find any, and simply wanted to retain power as the authority of God's word. Today, there are still two original copies of Tyndale's Bible.

Myles Coverdale and John Rogers were disciples of Tyndale and decided to pick up where Tyndale left off. In 1535, they produced the first complete printed English Bible in 1535, named **The Coverdale Bible**. John Rogers then printed a second edition in 1537 under the pseudonym "Thomas Matthew", thus naming it **The Matthew-Tyndale Bible**.

Coverdale Bible

A few years later, King Henry VIII had a change of heart about the Bible and requested Thomas Cranmer to produce **The Great Bible**, which was an English translation authorized for public use. Part of the reason for this was the fact that Henry VIII opposed the Pope and the Roman Catholics. He figured producing this Bible would shift the power to the Episcopalian Church. The Great Bible was published in 1539.

Later on, John Calvin (founder of Presbyterian Denomination) and John Knox published **The Geneva Bible** in 1560. The Geneva Bible was the most popular English translated to date. It was the first to add numbered verses to each chapters. It also had notes and references in the margins similar to any of today's study Bibles. The Geneva Bible is also the one Shakespeare quoted in many of his plays. Although it was very popular, it was somewhat controversial. Its marginal notes were unkind to both the Episcopalian and Catholic Churches. For example, it claimed that the Pope was the Anti-Christ.

Geneva Bible

In 1568, under Queen Elizabeth I, a revision of the Great Bible, known as the **Bishop's Bible** was produced. This version shed a kinder light to the leaders of the Episcopalian Church, but was not very accurate nor popular.

By now, the Roman Catholic Church realized they had lost the war of keeping the Bible in Latin. So, they made their own English translation called the **Rheims New Testament** in 1582.

In 1604, Episcopalian Church leaders desired a new translation that was more accurate than the Bishop's Bible, but not as controversial as the Geneva Bible. So under King James I, fifty scholars studied The Tyndale New Testament, The

Coverdale Bible, The Matthew-Tyndale Bible, The Great Bible, The Geneva Bible, and the Rheims New Testament. In 1611, the **King James Bible** was introduced. This is probably the most popular English translation of all time. Even today, many churches still insist on using this translation. However, it has many errors. Remember that the Episcopalians (England), the Protestants, and the Roman Catholics were all fighting against each other. There was a major power struggle. Therefore, all of the translations mentioned above have mistranslations in the interest of the particular church. It is also important to note that in 1611, the King James Bible contained the Apocrypha making it 80 books. It wasn't removed until 1885 leaving 66 books.

Many years later in America, the United States Congress authorized the first English Bible printed in 1782. The was **Robert Aitken's 1782 Bible**. This Bible allowed soldiers to carry God's word with them during the Revolutionary War, because England refused to export their Bibles to America.

Young's Literal Translation

Robert Young printed **Young's Literal Translation** in 1862. It is widely considered among scholars and Biblical experts to be the most accurate English translation. There are two major reasons for this. One is the tenses. This translation keeps the tenses that the original Hebrew and Greek use, while most English translations do not. For example:

Genesis 1:1 – In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (KJV)

Genesis 1:1 - In the beginning of God's preparing the heavens and the earth (YLT)

You may ask, "what's the big deal?", we know that the earth had to be created in the past. However, what about passages that are talking about life, death, heaven, and hell? How can we know if God is talking about the past or the future, if the tenses are not even correct? It is extremely important.

The second reason that Young's Literal Translation is the most accurate is its translations of the Hebrew word **olam** and the Greek word **aion**. These words are correctly translated as "ages" or "age-during" instead of "ever" or "everlasting." For example:

John 3:16 – For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (KJV)

John 3:16 – for God did so love the world, that His Son – the only begotten – He gave, that every one who is believing in him may not perish, but may have life age-during (YLT)

As you can see, this completely changes the meaning of the most popular verse in the Bible. Many Christians have been tricked because of these mistakes.

Removal of The Apocrypha

It wasn't until the 1880s, when England printed the **English Revised Version** of the Bible to replace the King James. This was the first Bible to remove the 14 Apocryphal books. All Bibles from all denominations previously contained the Apocrypha. What were the criteria they used to remove these books? There were four criteria they used for a book to be considered accurate:

1. **Apostolic Origin** – the books must have been written either by the apostle themselves, who were first hand witnesses, or by associates of the apostles (for the New Testament)
2. **Universal Acceptance** – acknowledged by all major Christian denominations and Jewish authorities (for the Old Testament)
3. **Liturgical Use** – was widely used in church services
4. **Consistency** – contained beliefs that were consistent with the rest of the Bible

Removal of these books caused a lot of debate among various Christian denominations. Most Protestants agreed with the removal, but most Catholics and Orthodox Christians did not. This led to many versions of the Bible, each with different books from the Apocrypha. Today, the vast majority of Christians from all denominations now agree with their removal. However, Catholics still use the Apocrypha as a reference, but do not necessarily hold the books as authoritative.

American Translations

In response to the English Revised Version, Americans published the **American Standard Version (ASV)** in 1901, which also removed the Apocrypha.

In 1909, the **Scofield Reference Bible** was published, which first introduced the futurist view of Revelation. Note that this view is inconsistent with what Jesus teaches in the gospel. See my article on Revelation for more.

In 1971, the ASV was revised to the **New American Standard Version Bible (NASV, NASB, or NAS)**. However, Americans realized that this version did not

flow well because English usage had changed, so they produced the **New International Version (NIV)** in 1973.

Many of you know that English is a complicated language. A language is determined by usage, and kids everyday seem to invent new English words. This is why it is very hard to have a perfect English translation. People want a translation that both flows and is accurate. However, I would prefer a translation that is more accurate over one that flows with everyday conversation. This is why I use Young's Literal Translation as I discussed above.

Conclusion

As I mentioned in the introduction, the Bible was written by 40 different authors, over a period of 1600 years, in 3 separate continents. How can a book that was written by 40 different authors be this consistent? God Himself had to tell the authors what words to write. The Bible is God inspired from beginning to end. Also, the amount of manuscript evidence of the Bible's existence surpasses that of any other ancient writing. Today, there are many mistakes in the Bible due to a series of mistranslations over the last 1,500 years. However, with the help of the internet, many of these mistakes can be corrected. The fact that **olam** and **aion** mean a period of time instead of eternity is staring to spread throughout Christian forums. We simply just need more people to stand up for what is true.



The baptism by immersion of Jesus in the Jordan by John the Baptist

Is there evidence, besides the Bible, proving that Christ existed?

This is a topic of much debate among many religionists and archaeologists. However, the account of Christ's life, as found in the Bible—which is inspired revelation from God—serves as proof enough of His existence! However, there are other sources that contribute to the proof of His life and death.

A second-century theologian, Justin Martyr, wrote, “Now there is a village in the land of the Jews, 35 stadia from Jerusalem, in which Christ was born, as you can ascertain also from the *registries* of the taxing under Cyrenius your first procurator in Judea” (*First Apology*, chapter 34).

Martyr was referring to the records of Jesus' birth in Judea that were still in existence in his day. But, since he was a theologian who would naturally support accounts of Christ's existence, his account may seem invalid to the doubter.

What about historians against Christianity? What did their writings say?

One of such anti-Christian mentality was Cornelius Tacitus, a Roman historian, senator, consul and governor of the province of Asia. Concerning Jesus and His followers, Tacitus wrote, “Nero...punished with every refinement the notoriously depraved Christians (as they were popularly called). Their originator, Christ, had been executed in Tiberius' reign by the governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate. But in spite of this temporary setback, the deadly superstition had broken out afresh, not only in Judea (where this mischief had started) but even in Rome” (*The Annals of Imperial Rome*, XV, 44).

Julian the Apostate (called such because he rejected Christianity after being raised in it), a fourth-century emperor, wrote, “Jesus, whom you celebrate, was one of Caesar's subjects. If you dispute it, I will prove it by and by; but it may be as well done now. For yourselves allow, that he was enrolled with his father and mother in Cyrenius...But Jesus having persuaded a few among you, and those the worst of men, has now been celebrated about 300 years; having done nothing worthy of remembrance; unless anyone thinks it is a mighty matter to heal lame and blind people, and exorcise demoniacs in the villages of Bethsaida and Bethany” (*Cyril Contra Julian*, VI, 191, 213).

These are just two quotes from pagan Roman scholars who loathed Christianity. Since these men had access to government records, and hated what Christians believed and stood for, they could have easily “disproved” and discredited the existence of Christ if they so wished. But, because they could not do such a thing, their writings only add to the *monumental proof* of the life of Christ.

What about the Jewish people? If Christ did not exist, how then could the Jews reject Him?

In his book *Antiquities of the Jews*, Jewish historian Flavius Josephus writes about Jesus, His disciples and John the Baptist. He referred to John as “the good man” (XVIII, 5, 2). Modern-day scholars recognize Josephus’ account of the death of James, “the brother of Jesus who was called Christ” (XX, 9, 1), as genuine.

The Jewish Encyclopedia (1907 edition) explains that Jesus is also mentioned in the *Talmud*, the Jewish tradition consisting of the Mishnah and the Gemara. These references to Christ are found in the sections *Shabbath 104b* and *116b*; *Sanhedrin 43a*, *67a* and *107b*; and *Sotah 47a*. You may want to read an article entitled “Jesus of Nazareth,” from *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (1907), the articles “Jesus Christ” and “Talmud and Midrash” from *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* (1981), or the article “Jesus” in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* for more background concerning this subject.

These sources offer valuable information regarding the many proofs of the life of Christ. They point to the immutable facts that He: was born of a virgin, was of Jewish nationality, preached the gospel, healed the sick and diseased, and was betrayed and brutally slaughtered.

The King James Version (1611) of the Bible

As an accredited pastor of the National Association of Christian Minister, I write this for the people in our home churches in UK and abroad. On occasion, I have been asked why we, in our home churches, use the outdated King James Version (1611), de Statenvertaling (de Nieuwe Statenvertaling) in Dutch, The former Louis Segond translation in French? To answer that, we must touch on some complex and technical subjects. I, accordingly, have attempted to simplify the manner to a degree that most can understand.

In Proverbs 22:28 the Bible says to "Remove not the ancient landmarks which thy fathers have set." A landmark is a surveyor's term and refers to a benchmark or property marker. Today, in most jurisdictions, it is against the law to move or alter a survey landmark.

Christianity has its foundations in an authorizing and governing document. That document is the Bible. Any attorney will understand the critical nature of altering an authorizing and governing document. Because the Bible is in every sense the final and absolute foundation of what we as Christians believe and

practice, it only is prudent that we be concerned that the foundation is sure and the benchmark has not been altered.

For almost two millennia the church of Jesus Christ accepted a set of Greek and Hebrew texts that were received by virtually all gospel preaching, Bible believing churches of whatever group. This text was called the Received Text (or Textus Receptus in Latin). Down through the centuries biblical scholars and church leaders had assembled the existing Greek and Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible. From that compilation, the vast majority were in virtual agreement. These formed the basis of the Received Text.

In the year 1611 A.D., King James I of England was influenced to provide a common Bible for the English speaking world. Hence, he authorized a translation of the Bible into English that came to be known as the Authorized Version or as it is more commonly known, the King James Version. King James selected a committee of Greek and Hebrew scholars from the Church of England. These men were "low church" individuals with ties to the Puritans and later the Pilgrims who emigrated to America. They worked from the text of the Greek and Hebrew testaments that had been received" or accepted by virtually all branches of gospel preaching, Bible believing Christians from the apostolic era to that time. Their product, the King James Version of the Bible, has been, until just recently, the universal standard for Bible believing Christians of the English speaking world.

Enter Textual Criticism

Textual criticism is an academic discipline in which scholars study existing Greek and Hebrew biblical manuscripts. Prior to the advent of the moveable type printing press in 1455 by Gutenberg, all copies of the Bible were hand copied by scribes and were called manuscripts. Because they were individually produced by human hands, they were prone to mistakes in manual copying.

Textual critics study the various extant (existing) manuscripts and note any discrepancies that may have occurred between different copies. Then, by comparing them, a majority consensus is established. Should a misspelled word be found, or should a word have been accidentally added or omitted from a given manuscript, the textual critic endeavors to by consensus establish the correct reading.

A major theory of textual criticism is that some later manuscripts were copied from earlier ones, therefore, the earlier manuscripts are presumed to be a more accurate source of the Scriptures. (The presumption is that scribal errors would accumulate in later copies). Hence, textual critics give much more

credence to early manuscripts than to later copies even if the later be greater in number.

The problem with this theory is that the early church had great reverence and respect for their "accepted" or "received" manuscripts of the Scriptures. Accordingly, when a given copy of the Scriptures became tattered and worn, it was carefully copied and then burned. Hence, there are virtually no copies of the earliest manuscripts used by the churches.

However, there is evidence that certain cults and sects within early Christians followed the opposite practice. They preserved their manuscripts regardless of condition. Therefore, the crucial premise of textual criticism - that the oldest manuscripts are always to be preferred to more recent copies is critically flawed.

Manuscripts Aleph and B

In the latter half of the 19th century when textual criticism perhaps was at its zenith, two ancient manuscripts were found in the Mediterranean world that would come to revolutionize the work of the textual critics. A manuscript was "found" in a Roman Catholic monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai in the Sinai desert. It came to be known as Manuscript Aleph and it also was known as Codex Sinaiticus ("codex" being a Latin word for a bound volume).

About the same time another ancient manuscript was "found" in the library of the Vatican. It became known as Manuscript B or Codex Vaticanus. Both of these manuscripts were determined to have come from the 4th century A.D. and are considered the oldest basically complete copies of the New Testament to exist. Hence, they were considered by the textual critics to be the mother lode of ancient Bible manuscripts.

It is noteworthy that both of these manuscripts were "found" in Roman Catholic libraries. (The Roman Catholic Church historically has never given great credence to the Scripture or its teachings). Moreover, the Codex Sinaiticus had been produced by scribes of the Alexandrian sect in early church history. The Alexandrians were a heretical cult similar to the modern Jehovah Witnesses. They held major doctrinal deviations pertaining to the person of Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding the questionable source of Codex Sinaiticus, it became the premiere source for future textual criticism.

Drs. Westcott and Hort

Two British textual critics championed these newly found manuscripts. Their names were Dr. B. F. Westcott and Dr. F. J. A. Hort. They

represented a branch of the Church of England which was enamored with the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. Westcott and Hort in their writings showed a keen friendliness to Roman Catholic theology, occult spiritism and German Rationalism otherwise known as modernism. They, by no stretch of the imagination, could be considered fundamentalists as the term was later coined and used. Rather, if they lived today, their theology and philosophy (as evidenced by their writings) would be called liberal, humanistic, sacramental and even have occult overtones.

Drs. Hort and Westcott together collated and Text of the New Testament. The "new" Greek text was in contrast with and in distinction to the text that had been received by virtually all Bible believing churches for the preceding 19 centuries. In the last 100 years it has been re-edited by Nestle, Aland and others, and today is generally referred to as the critical text. It represents less than 1% of existing manuscripts.

From this critical text and its direct predecessor, the Westcott and Hort Text, virtually all modern translations and versions of the Bible have been translated into English.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE CRITICAL TEXT IS CORRUPT! Not only are its origins and associations suspect, the actual text itself is full of deletions and dilutions of the time honored Scripture received by translations based upon the critical text have diluted reference to the blood of Jesus Christ (e.g. Romans 3:25, Colossians 1:14, Revelation 1:11, Luke 22:20 et al), the Deity of Christ (e.g. Jude 4, Revelation 1:11), the inspiration of the Scriptures (e.g. 1 Timothy 3:16), and salvation by faith (e.g. John 3:36) to mention a few. Space does not allow us to list the numerous instances of serious dilution or deletions of major doctrinal truth in modern versions, but it is lengthy. There are thousands of textual changes.

If a survey benchmark has been moved or altered, all surveying after that point will be distorted. And because the critical text is in our view corrupt, any version of the Bible translated from it is suspect.

Modern Versions

The venerable King James Version of the Bible is not copyrighted. It is considered a public domain publication of the Word of God. However, virtually all modern versions are copyrighted. As any author or publisher knows, a copyright is for protection of commercial rights. It means that no one else may market their Bible without paying the publisher or at the least receiving written permission to do so. Does not the Apostle Peter refer to some in the last days "making merchandise of you" regarding the things of God (II Peter 2:3)?

Moreover, a number of the modern versions (based upon the critical text) have used less than precise methods for translation. Some have used a literary device known as "dynamic equivalence". This is a fancy term that essentially means some translators have taken the liberty to come up with what they think are modern equivalents for specific words in the manuscript text rather than precisely translating the specific words of the text. In effect, this is a running commentary on the part of the translators, injecting into the translation what they think a given passage means, rather than rendering a precise translation of what the scriptural writers actually wrote. There is nothing wrong with Bible commentaries. However, to insert personal bias under the guise of translation is not only less than a faithful rendering of the text, it is deceptive.

In at least one case, a popular version has had the honesty to indicate in its subtitle that it is a paraphrase. Unfortunately, unwary minds often look at such a Bible paraphrase as the Bible nevertheless. Some versions have used vulgar and crude terms in their translations. They have seemed oblivious to the unique purity of purpose of the Scripture.

As mentioned above, cardinal New Testament doctrine such as the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Deity of Christ and the inspiration of Scripture is routinely diluted in recent translations based upon the critical text. That should give pause for concern!

The Godly Heritage of the KJV

In viewing the distortions, deletions, corruptions, dilutions, changes and questionable associations of the critical text and its resultant modernist translations, we will stick to the venerable King James Version of the Bible that our forebearers so faithfully used. It is an ancient landmark.

Down through the centuries, it has been the Bible used for every major revival to sweep across portions of the English speaking world. It was the Bible of the Pilgrim forefathers of this nation. And, it has been God blessed wherever it has been used. It is based upon the ancient text which has been, until just recently, the universally accepted text of the Scriptures from the time of the apostles.

Modern versions have been marketed extensively as being easier to read than the archaic, old fashioned KJV Bible. However, recent computerized document analysis programs have objectively revealed that the King James Version of the Bible is in fact easier to read than the NIV or the NASB. The Fleisch-Kincaid research firm has, through computerized analysis, shown that the KJV vocabulary has fewer syllables per word than the NIV or the NASB. Furthermore, the KJV has less complex sentences than the NIV or NASB. In

reality, the KJV is easier to read than its modern counterparts in the manner of vocabulary and syntax.

There is undisputed eloquence and beauty in the King James Version. Moreover, the English language was at its zenith in the early 17th century for poetic beauty and eloquence. Interestingly, one of the major criticisms of the King James Version is actually a strength. People unacquainted with proper English complain about the use of "thee" and "thou" etc. in the King James text.

However, as anyone who knows linguistics will attest, many languages have at one time had a common level which was spoken on the street and a higher or formal level that was used in reference to royalty and God. The usage of "thee" and "thou" etc. in old English is a form of higher English that no longer is commonly used. It originally was used in formal situations where deference and respect to nobility, royalty and Deity were appropriate.

Unfortunately, our contemporary American English usage of "you" and "yours" etc. makes no allowance for such deference and brings all of our language back to the lower level. The King James Version respectfully and appropriately refers to God and other notables as "tbee" or "thou" in accordance with their due respect. Most modern language translations have diluted that deference.

NOTES

Dr. Frank Logsdon was the Co-founder of the New American Standard Bible (NASB). He since has renounced any connection to it. "I must under God renounce every attachment to the New American Standard Version. I'm afraid I'm in trouble with the Lord . . . We laid the groundwork; I wrote the format; I helped interview some of the translators; I sat with the translator; I wrote the preface . . . I'm in trouble; I can't refute these arguments; it's wrong, terribly wrong . . . The deletions are absolutely frightening . . . there are so many . . . Are we so naive that we do not suspect Satanic deception in all of this?

Upon investigation, I wrote my dear friend, Mr. Lockman, (*editor's note: Mr. Lockman was the benefactor through which the NASB was published*) explaining that I was forced to renounce all attachment to the NASV (*same as the NASB*).

You can say that the Authorized Version (KJV) is absolutely correct. How correct? 100% correct . . ."

Comparisons of Bible Versions in English

Among many confessions that come from the heart and mouth of a Christian, perhaps there is none that is of more importance than the following: "Every word of God is pure" (Prov.30:5). Prior to salvation, the believer may have exhibited an attitude of careless indifference or defiant rebellion towards God's revelation. However, once an individual has experienced God's saving grace in salvation he receives a new love, taste, passion, and concern for the Word of God, as spoken of in Psalm 119:140: "Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it."

The new convert soon discovers that there are numerous translations available on the market, all claiming to faithfully reproduce the original intentions of the biblical authors in modern English. Not being aware of textual criticism and the history of Catholic/Protestant translations, the neophyte usually chooses one translation as his main source based upon a pastor's endorsement or a popular media-personality's preference. Oftentimes, the decision is merely based on the fact that the new believer likes the way a certain version "reads," and feels comfortable with its style.

For some, years may pass before they ever discover the numerous discrepancies between the various Bible versions, especially the differences between the King James Version and all others. The average church member of this generation has been bombarded by religious advertising to believe that the KJV is archaic, antiquated, outmoded, and even faulty. The newer versions are exalted as paragons of faithfulness and purity to the oldest and best manuscripts, of which the KJV translators supposedly did not have access to, thus leading the consumer to purchase a modern translation that contains the Word of God in easy-to-understand English.

Perhaps through the influence of a friend, booklet, or one's own personal comparisons of the various translations, an individual eventually begins to comprehend that the differences between the KJV and other translations involve more than archaic English. Many have been surprised to discover not only that words or phrases have been deleted from modern versions, but that entire verses have been omitted in some cases.

Have you ever personally looked into this issue? Have you ever done a comparison of modern versions with the KJV? Would it bother you if you were given demonstrable proof that the NIV, NAS, and other translations omit important words, phrases, and verses that affect Bible doctrines? Many evangelical Christians are totally apathetic when shown obvious discrepancies and errors in the newer versions. Such disinterestedness is appalling in the life of

a professing Christian who claims to follow Christ in the pathway of discipleship, especially considering that Christ himself said that "...the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). Even more, our Lord said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18). May God raise up in our generation an army of believers who are thoroughly persuaded that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God," and unflinchingly hold to verbal inspiration rather than conceptual inspiration!

How many words or phrases would have to be deleted from your Bible before you would become uncomfortable or upset? Would you be disgruntled if you were to discover that someone had taken a pair of scissors and cut five words out of your Bible? How about ten words? Or one hundred words? To better understand the issue being discussed, consider your own home. Assuming that you owned a brick home, how many bricks would have to be removed before you would begin to be upset? Would it bother you if a thief stole one of the bricks from the front of your house? How about ten bricks, or one hundred bricks? It is possible that even if one hundred bricks were removed, your house would still stand and be recognized as a home, but its structure would be seriously weakened, would it not? Would it be of any consolation for a building contractor to inform you that all of the modern homes were being built that way, and were actually superior to the older homes that had no bricks missing? An honest observer would have to admit that, although the home that was missing bricks was still liveable, it was clearly deficient in structural soundness, and that it was inferior to homes that were not missing any bricks! And so it is with modern Bible versions when they are compared to the KJV, which is based on the vast majority of Greek manuscripts that support the Textus Receptus. The modern versions are based on a few contradictory and corrupt manuscripts that are replete with additions, omissions, and changes. Consider the following omissions, and see if honesty does not demand the admission that modern versions are corrupt and inferior to the KJV.

Matthew 1:25

- KJV: "And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son."
- NAS: "...until she gave birth to a Son."
- NIV: "...until she gave birth to a son."
- NAB: "...until she bore a son..." (Note: The New American Bible is a popular Catholic translation)
- NWT: "...until she gave birth to a son."
(Note: The New World Translation (NWT) is the "bible" of the Jehovah's Witnesses)

It is obvious by way of comparison that the modern versions are missing a "brick" or word, "firstborn." Does it really matter that this one word is missing from the cited verse? Is the meaning of the text changed by this "little" deletion? And why do the NIV and NAS agree with the translations that the Watchtower Society and Roman Catholicism endorses?

James R. White, author of *The King James Only Controversy*, would have us believe that this omission is simply an example of "parallel influence" (p.217), wherein previous copyists of Bible manuscripts were "influenced" to take the word "firstborn" from Luke 2:7 and insert it into Matthew 1:25! White, with tongue-in-cheek, seeks to defend the deletion of "firstborn" from the NIV and NAS by telling his readers that the word is still in Luke 2:7 in these same translations. Never mind the fact that our forefathers in *The Westminster Confession of Faith* and the *1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith* believed that the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek were "immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages."

White's "defence" flippantly bypasses the problem of "firstborn" being deleted from the NIV and NAS by asserting that the word is an addition to the Textus Receptus, a serious verdict for anyone who believes Proverbs 30:6: "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." If White is correct, then the KJV contains an error in Matthew 1:25! Such should be a matter of great concern to any Christian who believes that every word of God is pure and inspired. However, if White is wrong (and he is!), then the modern versions are corrupt, and come under the judgment of God, as revealed in Deuteronomy 4:2: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it..." White's smokescreen is nothing more than a mere waving of his magical wand to hoodwink those who are not familiar with the different manuscripts that the newer versions are based on!

Let us come together and reason about the deletion of "firstborn" in the newer versions. It is obvious that this omission favours the Roman Catholic teaching that Mary had only one child, while the KJV reveals that Jesus was the first of several children that she and Joseph had together. Matthew 13:55,56 makes it clear that Mary and Joseph had other children after Jesus was born first. The deletion of "firstborn" also makes room for the Roman Catholic teaching of Mary's perpetual virginity. James White would tell us that the deletion is no big deal since the word is recorded in Luke 2:7 in the modern versions. Again, would it bother you to discover that one brick had been removed from your home? Perhaps the thief will return five, ten, or twenty years later and remove the other brick (Luke 2:7). What are we to do if modern scholarship discovers

some new manuscripts down the road, and tells us that "firstborn" in Luke 2:7 was a copyist's error or interpolation?!

Some may be surprised to realize that the bible of the Jehovah's Witnesses agrees with the NIV and the NAS against the KJV? Why is this? The answer is found in the Forward of the NWT, wherein it is stated that their translation is based on the Greek text revised by Westcott and Hort. By-and-large, the manuscripts being used by translators of the modern versions are based on the same manuscripts that Westcott and Hort revised to produce the *Revised Version* (1881). Prior to 1881, all Protestant translations in the English language were based on the Textus Receptus (excluding Wycliffe's translation).

White moves about among evangelical circles, and is considered by some to be a leading advocate for the legitimacy of the modern translations that are based on the *Nestle/Aland* Greek text, but his nonchalant attitude towards the omission and/or deletion of words from various manuscripts reveals a serious shortcoming in logical reasoning. His vindication for the omission of "firstborn" in the modern translations is to simply state that it is still found in Luke 2:7, apparently thinking that such an argument would hold weight with his readership, many of whom would be fooled by such a slipshod assertion that seems plausible. However, such an attitude towards the Word of God does not represent the mindset of Bible believers who hold to innerancy, but of those who are neo-evangelical in their thinking. If it does not matter whether a word, phrase, or sentence is deleted from the Greek text, then we have no authoritative standard, and should be honest enough to admit that we believe in the doctrine of errancy, i.e., that the Bible has errors. Such a view places the Christian in a precarious position, for he must ultimately rely on the so-called scholars and textual critics to pontificate concerning what words or phrases are inspired, a field that has revealed itself to be constantly fluctuating in its determinations of the true biblical text.

In the light of Rome's history of suppressing the Word of God from the laity, it is interesting to see her in this present era now producing copies of their Bible (NAB)"in cooperation with our separated brethren...with the approval of Church authority" (from the *Preface*). If you can't beat them, then try joining them! Our Protestant forefathers would be flabbergasted to realize that their modern-day counterparts are now working hand-in-hand with Roman scholars, and using the same corrupted Greek texts to produce Bibles for both groups! Undoubtedly, truth is stranger than fiction!

Matthew 5:22

- KJV: "...whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment."

- NAS: "...everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court."
- NIV: "...anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment."
- NAB: "...whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment." (Note: The New American Bible is a popular Catholic translation)
- NWT: "...everyone who continues wrathful with his brother will be accountable to the court of justice." (Note: The New World Translation is the "bible" of the Jehovah's Witnesses)

This verse demonstrates the great importance of basing one's theology and practice upon the proper Greek text, and its corresponding translation. The modern versions base their translation of Matthew 5:22 upon two primary manuscripts, *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus*, which happen to contradict one another in innumerable instances, and repeatedly conflict with the *Textus Receptus*. Any honest student of the Bible would have to admit that there is a significant difference between the KJV and the other translations cited above.

If the modern translations give the true writing of the apostle Matthew, then what are we to think of the attitude of the Lord Jesus as revealed in Mark 3:5, wherein we read that he "looked round about on them with anger"? Is he guilty before the court and subject to judgment?! It would appear from the NAS and NIV that the Lord of glory violated his own teachings given in the Sermon on the Mount! Obviously, the anger of Christ was a holy, righteous, and unblemished anger, far removed from the anger of mere men who are usually motivated by improper attitudes and motives. The Bible also reveals in other places that anger can be free from the blemish of sin if it emanates from the heart of an individual who is motivated by godly zeal. Eph. 4:26 states: "Be ye angry, and sin not..." Would anyone be willing to fault Moses for his attitudes and actions when he descended from Mount Sinai and broke the tablets before the people? Exodus 32:19 tells us that "Moses' anger waxed hot." There are times when anger is proper, right, and necessary, especially when it relates to the desecration of holy things by wicked and profane men. This writer thinks that it would be inappropriate for true Bible believers to display a flippant attitude towards the very topic being discussed, i.e., the innerancy of Scripture.

Referring back to our previous illustration mentioned at the beginning of this article, would it bother you if a thief stole three bricks from your house? Or if you had a bag of gold kept in the vault of a local bank, would you care if one of the employees reached into that bag and took out three golden nuggets for his own use? Well, if you think the way certain men do about the omission of certain words from the biblical text being no great matter, then you would have no problem with a few bricks or gold pieces that were found missing from your

property. However, if you would be irate at losing three bricks from your house or three golden pieces from your bag, then how much more should you be upset when "scholars" steal words from your Bible and say that they have not undermined the integrity and authority of God's revelation!

After all of the smoke has cleared from the air concerning the omission of "without a cause" in Matthew 5:22, we are still faced with a serious question that demands a verdict: *Did the apostle Matthew, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, write the three words that are recorded in the KJV, or did he not?!* This is not a trifling matter that is to be decided on the basis of one's preferences or predilections. The issue must be determined on the basis of the majority of Greek manuscripts that were preserved by the hand of Providence, not upon two corrupt manuscripts that were rejected by our Protestant ancestors. Those who hold to the superiority of the modern versions are the ones who must explain the omission in their translations, and explain how it can be reconciled with the actions of men like Moses, Phinehas (Num.25:8), Nehemiah (Neh.13:25), and David (1 Sam. 17:26), who exercised a holy anger towards sin and the desecration of God's Law, let alone the anger of the Lord demonstrated in Mark 3:5 and in the cleansing of the Temple.

Matthew 5:44

- KJV: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."
- NAS: "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."
- NIV: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."
- NAB: "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you." (Note: The New American Bible is a popular Catholic translation)
- NWT: "Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you." (Note: The New World Translation is the "bible" of the Jehovah's Witnesses)

Here is an amazing contrast between the KJV and the other translations! An elementary mathematician would readily spot the significant deletion of sixteen words from the text. Again, as will be repeated throughout this article, the difference is found in the different Greek texts which are being utilized in the translation process. *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus* are the golden calves that are idolized by modern "scholarship" as the final authorities in trying to determine what the original authors of the holy scriptures actually wrote, although these same textual critics are often men who scoff at the notion of innerancy, believing that the original penmen of Scripture, as well as scribes who later copied the extant manuscripts, were susceptible of errors in reporting history, numbers, geography, etc. A good example of this can be seen in Bart D.

Ehrman's book, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*: "My thesis can be stated simply: scribes occasionally altered the words of their sacred texts to make them more patently orthodox and to prevent their misuse by Christians who espoused aberrant views" (p.xi). Although Ehrman does not comment upon Matthew 5:44 in his book, he would undoubtedly hold that certain scribes added the sixteen words found in the KJV text, and deny that heretical scribes may have been the ones responsible for the deletions found in the minority manuscripts. Liberal scholarship turns the truth upside down, and makes illogical assertions such as are found in the title of Ehrman's work. Instead of it being a matter of heretics corrupting the scriptures for their own personal ideologies and doctrines, we are now told that it was actually a case of corruption by the orthodox! The sad thing about the whole matter is that many leading evangelical spokesmen endorse the modern translations, and give hearty approval to those who write in defense of their corrupt renderings!

Again, what is the Bible reader to do when he discovers the discrepancy between the versions found in Matthew 5:44? Whether he likes it or not, he is forced to become a textual critic himself, often relying upon subjective inclinations and doubtful deductions to determine which translation contains error. For this is the only plausible conclusion he can come to, since both translations cannot be right. One is right, and one is wrong! Both cannot be wrong unless you do not believe in divine preservation. Either Matthew wrote the words recorded in the KJV, or he did not write those words. If the KJV rendering is correct, then the modern translations contain serious error in deleting the words originally given by the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, if the modern translations give the true reading, then the KJV contains serious error in adding to the words of the living God. This is the crux of the matter! We must not put our heads into the sand by asserting that both sides contain truth, for we are not dealing with an ordinary book that simply comes from human inspiration. We are dealing with a special book that claims to be given by the inspiration of God. Let us handle God's Word with reverence, not with careless indifference.

Do not be deceived by those who would seek to soothe your conscience over the omissions found in this verse by saying that you can find those missing truths in other portions of God's Word. Such chicanery is a smokescreen used by liberals to deceive the masses from considering the possibility that their carving up of the Bible just might be the activity of one lurking in the shadows, who delights in stealing God's Word (cf. Matt. 13:19; Gen. 3:1).

Matthew 9:13

- KJV: "For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."
- NAS: "For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."
- NIV: "For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."
- NAB: "I did not come to call the righteous but sinners." (Note: The New American Bible is a popular Catholic translation)
- NWT: "For I came to call, not righteous people, but sinners." (Note: The NWT is the "bible" of the Jehovah's Witnesses)

Many leading evangelicals in our generation are teaching their students and/or church members that repentance is not a part of the gospel. Should we be surprised at such a position when the new translations that are being used in seminary classrooms and pulpits have deleted Christ's calling of men to repentance from sin in Matthew 9:13?! The two words that are missing, "*to repentance*," are full of weighty importance in revealing just exactly what Christ is calling sinners to! The KJV translation makes it clear that Christ is not calling men to positive thinking, moral reformation, political causes, financial schemes, or to a simple "acceptance" of him as their religious leader. He is calling them to forsake their sin! The omission of these two words takes the "bite" out of the humbling effect that is produced when men and women realize that a holy God demands godly repentance and forsaking of sin in order to experience true salvation. Modern man finds such a thought to be most unpalatable!

We need to pause and ask ourselves, "Does it matter whether our gospel invitations to those who are lost includes a call to repentance, or not?" Consider the following:

- The message of John the Baptist was "*repent* ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:2)
- The message of Christ himself was "*repent*: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17)
- The message of Peter was "*repent*, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ..." (Acts 2:38)
- The message of Paul before the heathen philosophers at Athens was this: "...but now God commandeth all men everywhere *to repent*." (Acts 17:30)
- The message of Paul to both Jews and Gentiles was "that they should *repent* and turn to God, and do works meet for *repentance*." (Acts 26:20)
- The message of Paul while ministering in Ephesus was "*repentance* toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 20:21)

The Great Commission that Christ gave to his church included the preaching of repentance, for he said "that *repentance* and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." In light of the above passages that set

forth repentance as integral to a proper gospel call, all who hold to the Word of God as their final authority should feel unsettled in their mind when they realize that the new translations omit "to repentance" in Matthew 9:13. The deletion of these two words fits very nicely into the theology that is disseminated by the Watchtower Society through local Kingdom Halls that deny the total depravity of men. When people feel that they have some innate goodness or power to work out their own salvation, then they will find it convenient to throw overboard any words or message that is offensive to their personal feelings or theology. Multitudes of professing Christians who are enamored with their modern translations are completely unaware of the hatchet job that was completed in 1881 by a committee of Englishmen who were given the task to update any archaic words in the KJV, but chose to take the liberty to completely forge a new translation that was based upon a new Greek text that they formulated according to their own textual and theological biases. When left to themselves behind closed doors, theological liberals took it upon themselves to cut, mutilate, and delete hundreds of words under the guiding of hand of B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort. You can thank Westcott and Hort if you discover that your translation has omitted the words "to repentance" in Matthew 9:13. D.A. Carson, in his book, *The King James Version Debate* applauds the past work of these two men:

"The theories of Westcott and Hort are almost universally accepted today. It is on this basis that Bible translators since 1881 have, as compared with the King James Version, left out some things and added a few others. Subsequent textual critical work accepted the theories of Westcott and Hort. The vast majority of evangelical scholars hold that the basic textual theories of Westcott and Hort were right and the church stands greatly in their debt."

For those who have had the smoke cleared from their eyes by reading the doctrinal beliefs of these two men, and who have found their theories to be altogether faulty and illogical, they will disagree with Carson by saying that the church today stands greatly in their deceit, not their debt!



Studying God's Word

Is the Bible truly God's Word?

Our answer to this question will not only determine how we view the Bible and its importance to our lives, but also it will ultimately have an eternal impact on us. If the Bible is truly God's Word, then we should cherish it, study it, obey it, and fully trust it. If the Bible is the Word of God, then to dismiss it is to dismiss God Himself.

The fact that God gave us the Bible is an evidence and illustration of His love for us. The term "revelation" simply means that God communicated to mankind what He is like and how we can have a right relationship with Him. These are things that we could not have known had God not divinely revealed them to us in the Bible. Although God's revelation of Himself in the Bible was given progressively over approximately 1500 years, it has always contained everything man needs to know about God in order to have a right relationship with Him. If the Bible is truly the Word of God, then it is the final authority for all matters of faith, religious practice, and morals.

The question we must ask ourselves is how can we know that the Bible is the Word of God and not just a good book? What is unique about the Bible that sets it apart from all other religious books ever written? Is there any evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word? These types of questions must be seriously examined

if we are to determine the validity of the Bible's claim to be the very Word of God, divinely inspired, and totally sufficient for all matters of faith and practice. There can be no doubt that the Bible does claim to be the very Word of God. This is clearly seen in Paul's commendation to Timothy: "... from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

There are both internal and external evidences that the Bible is truly God's Word. The internal evidences are those things within the Bible that testify of its divine origin. One of the first internal evidences that the Bible is truly God's Word is seen in its unity. Even though it is really sixty-six individual books, written on three continents, in three different languages, over a period of approximately 1500 years, by more than 40 authors who came from many walks of life, the Bible remains one unified book from beginning to end without contradiction. This unity is unique from all other books and is evidence of the divine origin of the words which God moved men to record.

Another of the internal evidences that indicates the Bible is truly God's Word is the prophecies contained within its pages. The Bible contains hundreds of detailed prophecies relating to the future of individual nations including Israel, certain cities, and mankind. Other prophecies concern the coming of One who would be the Messiah, the Saviour of all who would believe in Him. Unlike the prophecies found in other religious books or those by men such as Nostradamus, biblical prophecies are extremely detailed. There are over three hundred prophecies concerning Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. Not only was it foretold where He would be born and His lineage, but also how He would die and that He would rise again. There simply is no logical way to explain the fulfilled prophecies in the Bible other than by divine origin. There is no other religious book with the extent or type of predictive prophecy that the Bible contains.

A third internal evidence of the divine origin of the Bible is its unique authority and power. While this evidence is more subjective than the first two, it is no less a powerful testimony of the divine origin of the Bible. The Bible's authority is unlike any other book ever written. This authority and power are best seen in the way countless lives have been transformed by the supernatural power of God's Word. Drug addicts have been cured by it, homosexuals set free by it, derelicts and deadbeats transformed by it, hardened criminals reformed by it, sinners rebuked by it, and hate turned to love by it. The Bible does possess a dynamic and transforming power that is only possible because it is truly God's Word.

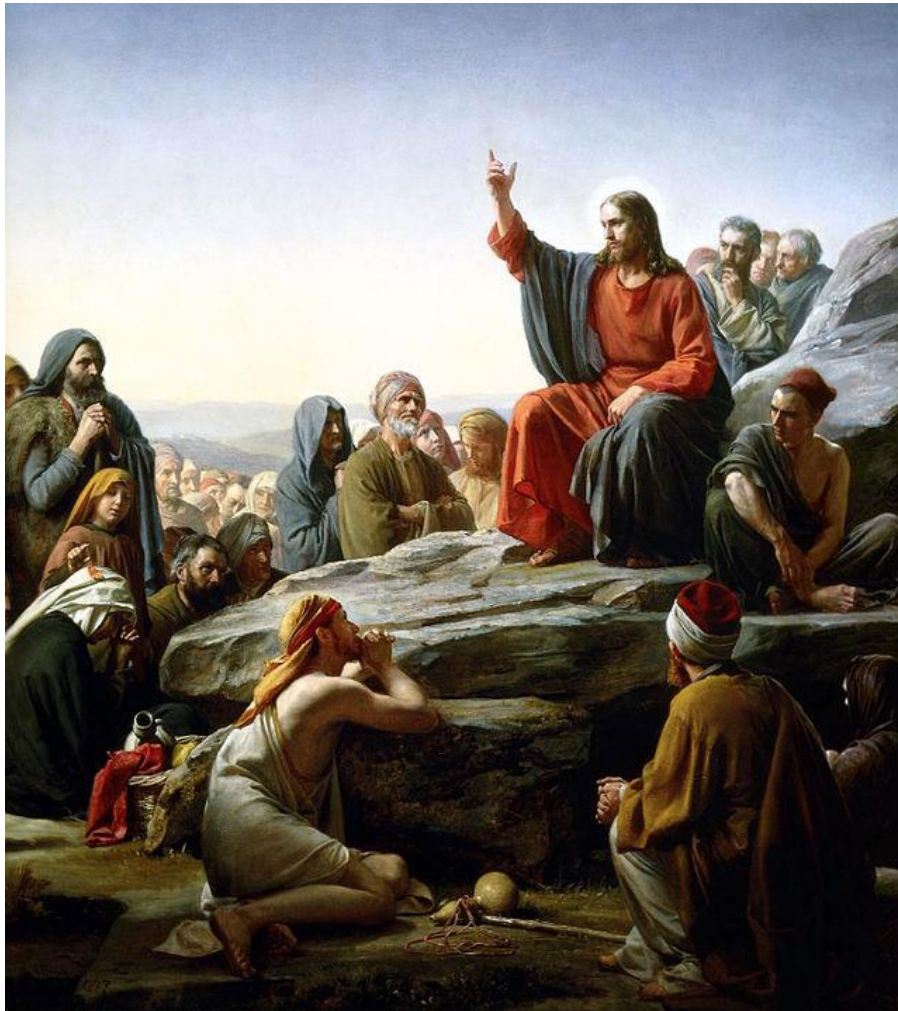
There are also external evidences that indicate the Bible is truly the Word of God. One is the historicity of the Bible. Because the Bible details historical events, its truthfulness and accuracy are subject to verification like any other historical document. Through both archaeological evidences and other writings, the historical accounts of the Bible have been proven time and time again to be accurate and true. In fact, all the archaeological and manuscript evidence supporting the Bible makes it the best-documented book from the ancient world. The fact that the Bible accurately and truthfully records historically verifiable events is a great indication of its truthfulness when dealing with religious subjects and doctrines and helps substantiate its claim to be the very Word of God.

Another external evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word is the integrity of its human authors. As mentioned earlier, God used men from many walks of life to record His words. In studying the lives of these men, we find them to be honest and sincere. The fact that they were willing to die often excruciating deaths for what they believed testifies that these ordinary yet honest men truly believed God had spoken to them. The men who wrote the New Testament and many hundreds of other believers (1 Corinthians 15:6) knew the truth of their message because they had seen and spent time with Jesus Christ after He had risen from the dead. Seeing the risen Christ had a tremendous impact on them. They went from hiding in fear to being willing to die for the message God had revealed to them. Their lives and deaths testify to the fact that the Bible truly is God's Word.

A final external evidence that the Bible is truly God's Word is the indestructibility of the Bible. Because of its importance and its claim to be the very Word of God, the Bible has suffered more vicious attacks and attempts to destroy it than any other book in history. From early Roman Emperors like Diocletian, through communist dictators and on to modern-day atheists and agnostics, the Bible has withstood and outlasted all of its attackers and is still today the most widely published book in the world.

Throughout time, sceptics have regarded the Bible as mythological, but archaeology has confirmed it as historical. Opponents have attacked its teaching as primitive and outdated, but its moral and legal concepts and teachings have had a positive influence on societies and cultures throughout the world. It continues to be attacked by pseudo-science, psychology, and political movements, yet it remains just as true and relevant today as it was when it was first written. It is a book that has transformed countless lives and cultures throughout the last 2000 years. No matter how its opponents try to attack, destroy, or discredit it, the Bible remains; its veracity and impact on lives is unmistakable. The accuracy which has been preserved despite every attempt to

corrupt, attack, or destroy it is clear testimony to the fact that the Bible is truly God's Word and is supernaturally protected by Him. It should not surprise us that, no matter how the Bible is attacked, it always comes out unchanged and unscathed. After all, Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Mark 13:31). After looking at the evidence, one can say without a doubt that, yes, the Bible is truly God's Word.



The Doctrinal Basis of the Christian Faith

The Berea School of Theology and Ministries on Internet accepts and proclaims the historic truths of Christian faith and conduct, including the following:

a) God and Mankind

We believe that the Lord our God is eternally One: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and fulfilling the sovereign purposes of His providence in creation, revelation, redemption, judgement, and the coming of His kingdom.

We acknowledge that though God made man and woman in His own likeness and image, conferring on us dignity and worth, and enabling us to respond to Himself, we are now members of a fallen race, who have sinned and come short of His glory.

We believe that the Father's everlasting love is shown first of all in that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, for us when, through our sinfulness and guilt, we were subject to His wrath and condemnation; and that His grace is shown completely by His putting sinners right with Himself when they place their personal faith and confidence in His Son.

We confess Jesus Christ as Lord and God, the everlasting Son of the Father; as truly human, born of the virgin Mary; as the Servant of the servants, sinless, full of grace and truth; as the only Mediator and Saviour of the whole world, dying in our place on the cross, representing us to God, redeeming us from the grip, guilt and punishment of sin; as the Second Adam, the head of a new humanity, living a life of perfect obedience, overcoming death and decay, rising from the dead with a glorious body, being taken up to the Father in heaven, one day returning personally in majesty and judgment to bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal death to the lost, to establish a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness, where there will be no more evil, suffering or death; and Victorious over Satan and all his forces, rescuing us from the dominion of darkness, and bringing us into His own kingdom; as the Word who makes God known.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who with the Father and the Son is worthy of our worship, who convicts the world of guilt in regard to sin, righteousness and judgment, who makes the death of Christ on the cross effective to sinners, enabling them to turn to God in repentance and directing their trust towards the Lord Jesus Christ; who through the new birth unites us with Christ, who is present within all believers; and makes us partake in Christ's risen life, focussing us to Jesus, freeing us from slavery to sin, producing in us His fruit, granting to us His gifts, and empowering us for service in the world.

b) The Holy Scriptures

We believe that the Old and New Testament Scriptures are God-inspired since their writers spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; therefore, they are fully trustworthy in all their affirmations; and as the written Word of God they are our only authority for faith and conduct.

We acknowledge the absolute need for the Holy Scriptures to be correctly interpreted under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and using the gifts of understanding and scholarship that God has given to His people.

c) The Church and its Mission

We recognise the Church as the body of Christ, of which He is the head, held together and growing up in Him through the Holy Spirit; both as a total fellowship throughout the world, and as local congregations in which believers gather to worship God, growing in grace through the Word, prayer and sacrament.

We acknowledge the command of Jesus Christ to proclaim the Gospel to all people, making them disciples, baptising them, and teaching them to obey Him.

We acknowledge the command of Christ to love our neighbours, resulting in unattached service to the Church and to society, in seeking until He comes again reconciliation for all with God and their fellows, in proclaiming liberty from every kind of domination; and in spreading Christ's justice in an unjust world.

THE THEOLOGY OF THE REFORMERS

Doctrine	Luther	Calvin	Zwingli / Anabaptists
Scripture	Only infallible authority for faith and salvation. Scriptures point to Christ.	Bible, not church is final authority. First scientific interpreter.	Z: Infallible authority – must determine all practice. Scripture will be fulfilled. Common people can understand.
Predestination	All events ordained by God. Taught double predestination.	Predestination necessary because of man's depravity.	Predestination based on providence of God.
Christ	In Lord's Supper, human nature takes on His divine characteristics such as omnipresence.	Orthodox view; one Person with two natures, with no intermingling.	Orthodox view; one Person with two natures, with no intermingling.
Man and sin	Man is depraved and unable to free himself. Grace necessary	Man is depraved and unable to free himself. Grace necessary	Man is depraved and unable to free himself. Grace necessary

Atonement	because of sin. Christ died a substitutionary death for all.	because of sin. Christ died a substitutionary death for all.	because of sin. Christ died a substitutionary death for all.
Salvation	Justification by faith alone, not works.	Justification by faith as legal act of God, imputing righteousness to the believer. Unconditional election is basis.	Christ died a substitutionary death; paid for original and actual sins. Dependent on eternal election.
Church	Priesthood of all believers composed of all believers on earth.	Salvation is possible outside of church. Church is visible and invisible.	A: Church composed only of believers; infants not involved. Church and state separate. Believers are pacifists. Z: infants baptised.
Baptism	Communicates grace. Produces forgiveness of sin; necessary for salvation. Infants baptised.	Only for believers, but children baptised to show they are in covenant.	A: Believers only; infant baptism rejected.
Lord's Supper	Christ present in real sense. Unbelievers may profit.	Communicates grace. Believer partakes of Christ through faith.	Z: Memorial only. Bread is symbol of Christ, not His literal body.

REFORMER'S VIEWS ON THE CHURCH AND ORDINANCES

View	Church	Baptism	Lord's Supper
Lutheran	All believers on earth constitute the one invisible church. Visible church observed	Necessary for salvation. Effects salvation. Infant baptism	"Consubstantiation" – Christ is bodily present "in, with, under" the elements.

	through ministry of Word and sacraments.	necessary; God works faith in them.	
Reformed	Universal church completed at Christ's return. Salvation possible outside the church.	Sign of believer's faith. Infant baptism necessary and sign of covenant.	Christ is spiritually present and mediates grace to participant.
Anabaptist	Church composed only of believers (infants not part of the church). Emphasised church purity through discipline.	Baptism only for believers. Infant baptism rejected.	Memoriam only. Bread and cup symbolises Christ and His death. No grace is mediated.

FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM

The following will affirm the major tenets of Calvinism as it is generally taught today. John Calvin did not author the so-called "five points of Calvinism."¹

¹ John Calvin (1509-1564), the respected and influential theologian of the Reformation, was born in Noyon, Picardy, sixty miles northeast of Paris, France in 1509. He began his studies for the priesthood at the University of Paris where he came under the influence of the humanists. (Because of a conflict with the bishop he eventually left to study law.) Later, Calvin studied law at Orleans, with further studies at Bourges. In 1534 he identified himself through conversion with Protestantism and was forced to leave France. John Calvin rejected the "superstitions of the Papacy." He was persecuted for his faith, imprisoned, but subsequently freed. Calvin came to Basel, Switzerland, where at the young age of twenty-six he completed his *magnum opus*, "*The Institutes of the Christian Religion*" (*Institutio Religionis Christianae*), an apologetic that defended Protestantism to the king of France. The work eventually underwent several revisions until it consisted of eighty chapters in four volumes. After a brief interlude in Strasbourg, John Calvin returned to Geneva, Switzerland, in 1541, to remain there the rest of his life. There, as pastor, Calvin spent his time preaching and lecturing daily. He also wrote commentaries on twenty-seven books of the Old Testament and on all the New Testament books except Revelation. Calvin's authority in Geneva was both ecclesiastical and political. John Calvin was called the first scientific interpreter of the Bible. He built a theology on the sovereignty of God that directed the Reformed Church in Europe and Scotland. He affirmed the Bible, not the church, as the final authority in religious matters. It was seen as the binding authority upon all people at all times. His adherence to inspiration was affirmed when he stated that it was the duty of people to accept "without any exception all that is delivered in the sacred Scriptures." John Calvin has been referred to as

They originated at the Synod of Dort (1619), and are also a result of affirming the distinctives of Calvinism over the centuries since. God as sovereign was central in the theology of Calvin and that is reflected in the five points. The five points emphasise God in His sovereignty and grace but also man in his depravity and sin. The five concepts are arranged logically and are contingent upon one another. If man is totally depraved, then he is unable to make an initial response to God; God must call man to salvation through unconditional election; God also makes provision for those whom He calls to salvation by the death of Christ; He secures their salvation by the effectual call of the Holy Spirit and keeps them secure in order that they might receive the eternal life He has promised them. The accompanying table gives a more detailed explanation.

Doctrine	Explanation
Total depravity	As a result of Adam's fall, the entire human race is affected; all humanity is dead in trespasses and sin. Man is unable to save himself.
Unconditional Election	Because man is dead in sin, he is unable to initiate response to God; therefore, in eternity past God elected certain people to salvation. Election and predestination are unconditional; they are not based on man's response.
Limited Atonement	Because God determined that certain ones should be saved as a result of God's unconditional election, He determined that Christ should die for the elect. All whom God has elected and Christ died for will be saved.
Irresistible Grace	Those whom God elected and Christ died for, God draws to Himself through irresistible grace. God makes man willing to come to Him. When God calls, man responds.

the "king of commentators," "the greatest exegete of the sixteenth century," and the "creator of genuine exegesis." Others have referred to John Calvin as the first of the scientific interpreters. He produced sound exegetical commentaries on nearly all the books of Scripture, as well as an exposition of his theology in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, as briefly described above. He enunciated the following important principles for biblical interpretation. (1) The illumination of the Holy Spirit is necessary to prepare the interpretator of Scripture. (2) Allegorical interpretation is satanic, leading people away from the truth of Scripture, and therefore is to be rejected. (3) Scripture interprets Scripture. This involved a number of things for John Calvin. It meant literal interpretation; it meant listening to Scripture and letting the author say what he will; it meant a study of the grammar of Scripture – meaning of words, the context, and comparing Scripture with Scripture on common subjects. Calvin's influence was felt throughout Europe as his doctrinal teachings spread quickly. The Heidelberg Catechism, written in 1563 by friends of Calvin, influenced the Reformed churches in Belgium, Holland, Germany and America. The Belgian Confession, written in 1561 by Guy de Bray, became the standard of belief in the Dutch Reformed church. The Synod of Dort met in 1618-1619, condemned Arminianism and the Remonstrants, and reaffirmed Calvinistic doctrine as expressed in the Heidelberg and Belgian Confessions.

Perseverance of the Saints	The precise ones God has elected and drawn to Himself through the Holy Spirit will persevere in faith. None whom God has elected will be lost; they are eternally secure.
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The Sacraments or Ordinances of the Church

Two Sacraments or Ordinances

The Reformers have historically recognised two sacraments or ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, whereas Roman Catholics have held to seven sacraments: Baptism, the Eucharist (Lord's Supper), Confirmation, Penance, Extreme unction, Holy Orders and Marriage. There is a difference of opinion regarding terminology. Catholics and some Protestants as Calvinists prefer the term *sacrament*, which comes from the Latin *sacramentum*, meaning "a thing set apart as sacred." The term *sacramentum* in the Latin Vulgate was also used to translate the Greek word *mysterion* (Ephesians 5: 32) and "came to be used for anything that had a secret or mysterious significance. The church-father Augustine called it 'the visible form of an invisible grace'." 'Sacrament' was later defined as an "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." By the sacraments or ordinances, we mean those outward rites which the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed to be administered in His church as visible signs of the saving truth of the Gospel. They are signs, in that they vividly express this truth and confirm it to the believer.

Baptism

Meaning. New Testament baptism had its origin in the command of Jesus Christ to make disciples and baptise them (Matthew 28: 19). In the origination of the ordinance or sacrament there is a particular order established; the first act was to make disciples, then those disciples were to be baptised. This is the pattern that is carried out in the book of Acts. The apostle Peter commanded that his hearers should first repent, and then be baptised (Acts 2: 38). Only those who heard the gospel understood and responded to it through faith and repentance, could be baptised. The result was that the people received the Word, and then were baptised (Act 2: 41). Those who responded to Philip's message first believed, then were baptised (Acts 8: 12), similarly with the Ethiopian (Acts 8: 38), with Paul (Acts 9: 18), the Caesarean Gentiles (Acts 10: 48), Lydia (Acts 16: 14-15), the Philippian jailers (Acts 16: 32-33), and Crispus (Acts 18: 8). All of these references indicate that baptism follows belief; repentance and faith precede the ordinance of baptism.

Baptism means identification. In the New Testament, baptism involves identification with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection. Being baptised in

the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2: 38) stresses association with Him in the rite. Romans 6: 04-05 illustrates the meaning of water baptism. It is a public declaration that the believer has been united to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith in His death and resurrection.

If you have **heard, believed, repented and confessed Christ as your Lord**, go forward during the invitation at any of our weekend services, and a Decision Counselor will lead you to take the next steps.

According to the Bible are other forms of baptism acceptable?

While we do not judge another's sincerity, we find that **baptism in the Bible was always done by immersion**. Since our goal is to practice "Bible things in Bible ways" we do not feel at liberty to accept man-made concessions that were not authorized or practiced by the apostles or the early Church. Every denomination, Protestant or Catholic, will accept immersion as valid Christian baptism. Other forms did not come into practice until much later. Baptism, as it is practiced in the Scriptures, cannot be visualized or portrayed in any form other than immersion.

What does the New Testament tell us about baptism?

- Baptism is **only for those old enough to believe**. No instances of infant baptism are recorded.
- Baptism is by **immersion**. (John 3:22-23, Acts 8:31-39, Romans 6:3)
- Baptism is for the **forgiveness of sins**. (Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16)
- The act of **baptism does not save you**. Jesus does.
- Baptism is a **demonstration of our acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Saviour**.
- Baptism – after hearing, believing, repenting and confessing – indicates **complete obedience of one who is following Scriptural counsel for receiving salvation**.
- It is completely **appropriate for one's baptism to be performed the same hour** or the same day that one surrenders to Christ. (Acts 8:26-40, Act 16:33)
- Baptism **should not be a subject of argument** or division among churches or believers.

Bible passages to study:

- Matthew 3:15
- Matthew 28:18-20
- John 3:16-23
- Acts 2:37-39

- Acts 5:29
- Acts 8:12 & 36
- Acts 10:48
- Acts 16:15 & 30-33
- Acts 18: 8
- Acts 22:16
- Romans 6:1-4
- Colossians 2:11-12
- 1 Peter 3:21, 1 John 2:4

According to the view of *Reformed and Presbyterian churches*, baptism is a sign and seal of the covenant. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper are "signs and seals of an inward and invisible thing by means whereof God works in us by the power of the Holy Spirit ... Like circumcision in the Old Testament, baptism makes us sure of God's promises... The act of baptism is both the means of initiation into the covenant and a sign of salvation."

Other views of baptism

- (1) Means of saving grace (baptismal regeneration). In this view baptism "is a means by which God imparts saving grace; it results in the remission of sins. By either awakening or strengthening faith, baptism affects the washing of regeneration." The Roman Catholic view is that faith is not necessary; the rite itself, properly performed, is sufficient. The Lutheran view is that faith is a prerequisite. Infants should be baptised and may possess unconscious faith or faith of the parents.
- (2) Symbol of our salvation. The view of Baptists and others is that baptism is only an outward sign of an inward change. It serves as a public testimony of faith in Jesus Christ. "It does not produce any spiritual change in the one baptised ... Baptism conveys no direct spiritual benefit or blessing." Moreover, it is to be conducted only with believers. Therefore, this second view is the only view that holds only believers should be baptised. The other views state that, along with adult converts, children (infants) should or may be baptised.

Mode

There are differences of long standing concerning the mode of baptism. Part of the problem is that the word *baptism* is actually an untranslated word, having been incorporated into English or any other language through transliteration of the Greek word *baptisma* (verb, *baptizo*). There are three modes of baptism being practiced today: sprinkling, pouring or effusion, and immersion.

Infant baptism or christening

Infant baptism, which is practiced in the Reformed Church and Presbyterians, Anglicans, Methodists, Lutherans and by Roman Catholics, is defended on several grounds. It is related to covenant theology. As infants in the nation Israel infant baptism is the counterpart of circumcision, which brings the infants into the Christian community. It is related to household salvation (compare Acts 16: 15, 31, 33-34; 18: 08). Some understand the statement, “when she and her household had been baptised” (Acts 16: 15) to mean infants were baptised.



The Lord's Supper

The Lord Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper on the eve of His crucifixion, commanding that His followers continue to observe it until His return (Matthew 26: 26-29; Mark 14; 22-25; Luke 22: 14-23). This was a new covenant or testament in contrast with the old Mosaic covenant. To enact the covenant, death was necessary because death provided forgiveness of sins. The apostle Paul also rehearsed the ordinance for the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 11: 23-32). Of course, the issue at hand is, what is the meaning of the Lord's Supper? There have been four distinct views in Christianity concerning its meaning.

The Reformed view is also called the Calvinist view because its members are from the Reformed churches (and others) who follow Calvin's teaching on the subject. Adherents to this view reject the notion of the literal presence of Christ in any sense and in this are similar to adherents of the memorial view. This view, however, does emphasise the “present spiritual work of Christ.” John

Calvin² taught that Christ is “present and enjoyed in His entire person, both body and blood.” He emphasises the mystical communion of believers with the entire person of the Redeemer ... the body and blood of Christ, though absent and locally present only in heaven, communicate a life-giving influence to the believer. Because of the mystical presence of Jesus Christ in the elements, grace is communicated to the participant in the elements; moreover, it is a grace that is similar to that received through the Word of God and in fact, it adds to the effectiveness of the Sacred Word.

2 John Calvin (1509-1564), the respected and influential theologian of the Reformation, was born in Noyon, Picardy, sixty miles northeast of Paris, France in 1509. He began his studies for the priesthood at the University of Paris where he came under the influence of the humanists. (Because of a conflict with the bishop he eventually left to study law.) Later, Calvin studied law at Orleans, with further studies at Bourges. In 1534 he identified himself through conversion with Protestantism and was forced to leave France. John Calvin rejected the “superstitions of the Papacy.” He was persecuted for his faith, imprisoned, but subsequently freed. Calvin came to Basel, Switzerland, where at the young age of twenty-six he completed his *magnum opus*, “*The Institutes of the Christian Religion*” (*Institutio Religionis Christianae*), an apologetic that defended Protestantism to the king of France. The work eventually underwent several revisions until it consisted of eighty chapters in four volumes. After a brief interlude in Strasbourg, John Calvin returned to Geneva, Switzerland, in 1541, to remain there the rest of his life. There, as pastor, Calvin spent his time preaching and lecturing daily. He also wrote commentaries on twenty-seven books of the Old Testament and on all the New Testament books except Revelation. Calvin’s authority in Geneva was both ecclesiastical and political. John Calvin was called the first scientific interpreter of the Bible. He built a theology on the sovereignty of God that directed the Reformed Church in Europe and Scotland. He affirmed the Bible, not the church, as the final authority in religious matters. It was seen as the binding authority upon all people at all times. His adherence to inspiration was affirmed when he stated that it was the duty of people to accept “without any exception all that is delivered in the sacred Scriptures.” John Calvin has been referred to as the “king of commentators,” “the greatest exegete of the sixteenth century,” and the “creator of genuine exegesis.” Others have referred to John Calvin as the first of the scientific interpreters. He produced sound exegetical commentaries on nearly all the books of Scripture, as well as an exposition of his theology in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, as briefly described above. He enunciated the following important principles for biblical interpretation. (1) The illumination of the Holy Spirit is necessary to prepare the interpretator of Scripture. (2) Allegorical interpretation is satanic, leading people away from the truth of Scripture, and therefore is to be rejected. (3) Scripture interprets Scripture. This involved a number of things for John Calvin. It meant literal interpretation; it meant listening to Scripture and letting the author say what he will; it meant a study of the grammar of Scripture – meaning of words, the context, and comparing Scripture with Scripture on common subjects. Calvin’s influence was felt throughout Europe as his doctrinal teachings spread quickly. The Heidelberg Catechism, written in 1563 by friends of Calvin, influenced the Reformed churches in Belgium, Holland, Germany and America. The Belgian Confession, written in 1561 by Guy de Bray, became the standard of belief in the Dutch Reformed church. The Synod of Dort met in 1618-1619, condemned Arminianism and the Remonstrants, and reaffirmed Calvinistic doctrine as expressed in the Heidelberg and Belgian Confessions.

GENERAL VIEWS ON THE LORD'S SUPPER

View	Christ and the Elements	Significance
Transubstantiation (Roman Catholic)	Bread and wine literally change to body and blood of Christ.	Believer partakes of Christ, who is being sacrificed in the Mass to atone for sins.
Consubstantiation (Lutheran)	Bread and wine contain the body and blood of Christ but do not literally change. Christ is actually present "in, with, and under" the elements.	Believer receives forgiveness of sins and confirmation of one's faith through partaking on the elements, but they must be received through faith.
Reformed (Presbyterian, Reformed)	Christ is not literally present in the elements but there is a spiritual presence of Christ.	Believer receives grace through partaking of the elements.
Memorial (Baptist, Mennonite)	Christ is not present physically or spiritually.	Believer commemorates the death of Christ.

Recommended reading:

"Systematic Theology" by Augustus H. Strong (Three Volumes in One)
(Pickering & Inglis)

Christian and Evangelical Doctrine

God and the Trinity

Is Jesus really God and how can that be?

Actually, believing in the deity of Jesus Christ is a fundamental part of being a true Christian. For if Christ was just a man, or even a super man, then we are of all men most foolish to be looking to Him to be the Saviour. For there is no man who could have had every single sin of every Child of God laid upon Him, carried them to the cross, and suffered death as the wages for those sins, and be risen up from that death, free from that debt of sin. There is no super man who could purge man from his sins as required, it would take a God. And there is

only one Jehovah God, who qualifies! In fact, the whole idea of Christ being just a man or lesser god, makes the Christian belief ridiculous.

Isaiah 43:10-11

- "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have Chosen: that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I AM He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me.
- I, even I, AM the Lord; and **beside Me, There is No Saviour.**"

That word translated Lord there is in the Hebrew [y^ehovah] Jehovah. There is no god before who is the Saviour, and no god after. Jehovah God is the only possible Saviour. No man, nor superman, could accomplish the task of being burdened with all our sins, judged for them, and be resurrected without them. Even a non-Christians can understand the bankruptcy of any other idea. For when we actually stop to think about it seriously, it's quite ludicrous! Unless this man was the very revelation of God (the only one able to become sin for us, and withstand the judgment thereof), we have no Saviour! And that is exactly what God said in Isaiah chapter 43 verse 11. Who could accomplish such a feat to be a saviour? The answer in all reasonableness is, no one but Jehovah God is the Saviour.

Which brings us to the question, "how then was He God, and yet judged of God for our sins?" The answer is found in God's Word of promise to His people of a Saviour, and yet there being none that could Save! If the Word of promise was to stand and be kept lawfully, then God had to of His own arm, bring Salvation. He Himself would have to be the Saviour. For no one else could! If we put our hope in man for Salvation, we hope in vain. It is the Lord God Himself who is our hope and will set us free. As it is written, only He can Save.

Psalms 146:3-8

- "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
- His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.
- Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God:
- Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is: which keepeth truth for ever:
- Which executeth judgment for the oppressed: which giveth food to the hungry. The LORD looseth the prisoners:
- The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:"

That word Lord there again is Jehovah. He made Heaven and earth and all that therein is. Scripture says Christ made Heaven and earth and all that therein is (John 1:3). There is no contradiction, for Christ is Jehovah God. There is one God, but God reveals aspects of Himself in three. In three, the purpose and will of God is worked out for man. God manifested as the Father, God manifested as the Son, and God manifested as the Holy Spirit! The Father shows God revealed in all his Omnipotent Glory, Might and Majesty, while the Son shows God revealed in the revelation of the Word, in Promise, in Judgment, in Salvation, in mercy, and in Sacrifice. And the Holy Spirit is God revealed to man in His omnipresence to perform His will throughout the earth and in men. This is one God, and one Power, not three! God has made it clear "from the very beginning" about this three in the one Godhead!

Genesis 1:26

- "And God said, let **us** make man in **our** image, after our likeness..."

In the Hebrew text this is plural, not singular. God is making it very clear that there is one God, and yet that one God works out His will in man in three. All throughout scripture we see this same picture of one God working out His Purpose and will on earth, in three.

Isaiah 48:16

- "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there **AM I, and now the Lord God, and His Spirit**, hath sent Me."

There we see God give us the illustration again. Three, from the very foundation of the world, from the time that the beginning was, there was the great I am, and the Lord God, and His Holy Spirit. Very concise, very clear, very unambiguous language showing us the three in the Godhead. It's just one more example (of many) of the way God's Word is consistent and in scriptural harmony throughout. Even as He said "before Him there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Him". You see, contrary to what some cults claim about multiple gods, God Himself denies it saying there is "ONE" God in heaven. But His purpose for man is revealed in "three."

With all these facts, still there are some misguided souls who insist, "No that's not true, Christ and His Spirit weren't there in the beginning with God, and He didn't create heaven and earth." But that simply is denying the obvious. Since God refutes that. Everywhere the scriptures tell the very same story of the Godhead being revealed in three. These are not isolated or ambiguous verses. Jesus Christ was fully God, who was made of no reputation by leaving the Glory

He had with the father, and was revealed in flesh, in the likeness of man, in order to be the Savior that only God could be.

Colossians 2:9

- "...For in Him dwelleth All the Fullness of the Godhead Bodily!"

How could God make that statement if it was not true? Of course, He couldn't and wouldn't. It is true! In Christ dwells all the Fulness of God, and yet He left His Glory in Heaven, abased Himself to become flesh and suffer for His People as man. This is the mystery of God that we can only grasp at ways to fully understand. Even though God plainly tells us..

1st John 5:7

- "For there are three that bear record in heaven, The Father, The Word, and the Holy Ghost; **And these Three are One!**

These three are One! There is One God, manifesting Himself in three. God, the Father, God the Holy Spirit, and God, the Word. The Word is a synonym for Christ. He is God's Word of Salvation come to fulfillment! The Promised Word of God revealed in the form of man! Man's word means nothing, but God's Word is sure, righteous, dependable, and the Law! And His Word declared that He was the Saviour! Therefore, He became flesh to fulfill that Word. The same Word that created heaven and earth and all that was therein became flesh! We read,

John 1:1

- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word **Was God.**"

Here is understanding. The Word was not only with God, but the Word "was God!" Which of course is totally consistent with everything else we read. He was with Jehovah God, who created all things, and He was Jehovah God. If there is only one God, and you are with that God, and you are God, then it would be tortuous of scripture to claim that this is not that God.

John 1:2

- "The same was in the Beginning with God.

The two are one God. The word was there at the beginning with God because it was God. He did not come into existence 2000 years ago when the Word was made flesh, He's been the Word of God from the beginning. He was made flesh

that the promise of God to Abraham might come to fruition. The Word in the flesh!

Galatians 4:4

- "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,"

And this could only be done because the Word was God. As of course we read in verse 3 of John 1:

John 1:3

- "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."

Not only from the beginning was the Word with God, and "was God", but as God, the Word was the creator of all (not some) things, And there is nothing that was made that was made by anyone but Him. All was made by the Word of God. It doesn't get much clearer than this. And despite some religious groups claims to the contrary, it doesn't take a Ph.d, or doctorate in Greek and Hebrew to understand what is being said. As Creator, He had to be Jehovah God.

Genesis 1:9

- "And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.
- And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good".

Genesis 2:4

- "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Jehovah God made the earth and the heavens,"

Hebrews 11:3

- "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear".

God Spake, and it was so. The Word of God created Heaven and earth. The very same Word of God John chapter one says Created all things and was made flesh. If that doesn't make Jesus God in man's eyes, nothing will! He was at the beginning, He was with God, He was God, and He created all things. The Word

of God framed the worlds, and scripture says that it is by faith that we understand this. That is the key. And John continues in verse 14:

John 1:14

- "and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth."

That which was with God from the beginning, and indeed was God and created all things, was "made Flesh and dwelt among men" as the only begotten of the Father. God, come to earth in the form of a man (begotten of God) in order to fulfill "His Word" of promise to be the Saviour. This is the cornerstone of true Christianity. A Saviour who is actually powerful enough to Save. God, which is thee only Saviour who could possibly Save us.

Sadly, there is debate from some quarters about this chapter, and it is the source of controversy, albeit unjustifiably. There is this train of thought by a certain group that "The Word" there is not really talking about Jesus Christ until verse 14. This group is fond of saying, "first came the spoken word, then the written word, then the living word which is Christ." They claim we've read Jesus into this, and that He is not mentioned until verse 14- "...the word was made flesh". May I say quite frankly and without hesitation, this idea is "Preposterous, irrational, illogical, and self serving." The whole context and structure of the passage is both clear and concise. The preceding verse makes that abundantly clear. It is tortuous of scripture to try and make "The Word" mean anything but Christ there.

John 1:10-13

- "He was in the World, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.
- He came unto His own, and His own Received Him not.
- But as many as Received Him to them gave He power to become the Sons of God, even to them which believe on His name:

Now why would anyone think this is not talking about Jesus? I.e., it says "as many as Believed on His name?" This is obviously Jesus! Why would anyone think the Word is God here and not Jesus? And then in verse 14 without so much as a pause we are to believe it starts talking about some OTHER Word, which is not God but Jesus? It is almost beyond comprehension, except in the honest understanding of what indoctrination is, and the will of man to rationalize away anything which they don't choose to believe! Some people believe whatever they want, and refuse to be confused by the facts. But honestly, the

facts indeed speak for themselves. It's not a question of if it says this, it's a question of man hearing what it says!

Another method some use to try and chip away at the Authority of the Word, is to attempt to convince people that John 1:1 was a mistranslation (sound familiar), and that it should read "the Word was with Divine and the Word was Divine". They key on the Greek Words, God [theos], and [logos], and claim it's not really God or Word and should be translated divine or some other non-deity. When one is indoctrinated, anything can be used in order not to receive what is actually written, because all that's required is an excuse. Let us simply test this theory of it not being God, by the context of the word itself.

John 1:1

- "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with divine, and the word was divine. The same was in the beginning with divine. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."

..Sure, sounds like divine is God doesn't it? Sure sounds like divine created all things doesn't it? Try as we may, we cannot force the scriptures to say something that they do not say, or to not say something which they say. That's called adding and taking away from the Word of God, and is condemned of God. That Greek word there [theos] is translated God over 900 times with no problem, yet because of their indoctrination in the view that Jesus is not God, they arbitrarily decide to change it here in order to facilitate the acceptance of their doctrines. Again, let's substitute the word logos.

- "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with Divine, and the Logos was Divine. The same was in the beginning with Divine. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made."

Again, sure sounds like the logos is God, doesn't it? Else God isn't the Creator, is He? Generally, whenever man doesn't want to receive the Word of God, it inevitably becomes a "translation problem" or a case where scripture doesn't really mean what it actually says. Such is always the case with these who don't want to receive the truth of scripture. I guess that's why God calls it false, because these don't follow the truth of the Word. They want to lead the Word rather than follow it! One false gospel does it one way, and another false gospel does it another way, but it always boils down to changing God's Word to suit their own traditions and beliefs (doctrines of men). As anyone can see from reading the content in context, their changes actually change nothing.

Another tactic is to claim that it really should be translated [A] God, not GOD. That also is ridiculous, for there is no article "A" in the Holy Canon there, and no justifiable rationalization for adding one there. It's simply another attempt to justify changing God's Word to conform to their own. They simply do not have the understanding that if Jesus is not God in their gospel, then they have no Saviour! For Besides God (says God), There is no Saviour! When we look carefully at this verse, even in the literal Greek, here is what it says there, word for word (as best I can type it using an english keyboard)!

en' arche en ho logos kai ho logos en

theos kai theos en ho logos

And here is the word for word interlinear rendering of what the Greek means.

**en' arche en ho logos kai ho logos en
in beginning was the word and the word was**

**theos kai theos en ho logos
God and God was the Word**

All the rationalization known to man is not going to change what God has written in His Holy Canon. Even when trying to supplant God's Word with their own private interpretations, the truth shines through. These aren't obscure words which we can't be sure what the meaning is, they are words used liberally throughout scripture, and their meanings common knowledge.

Another point for us to wisely consider is that the very fact that God was the Father of Jesus, assures us that the Son must be God. There was no earthly father, and so the Son cannot be a man. He must of necessity be a God-Man! We need to understand, Mary only provided flesh, "everything else" was God in this Woman! Think about that carefully and intelligently! No sin passed on to Christ, he took on only the flesh and none of the sin in it. Literally, it was God in the Flesh. The God Man! Seed via Jehovah God, not some other lessor god who some surmise was in heaven.

Matthew 1:18

- "now the birth of Jesus was on this wise: when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found **with Child of the Holy Ghost.**"

God, the Word, made Flesh by the Holy Spirit. If God wanted a good man, He could have used John the baptist, but by "The Word of the Law", Salvation requires Jehovah be our Saviour, for no man could carry the load or work of the Cross. A good man (even if we could find such a person, which is impossible) at best could keep himself out of Hell. He could never take on the sins of the world and pay for those sins, and be raised up His body not seeing corruption, and free from Sin. Which is why it Had to be God, the Saviour! No one else qualifies. No mortal man could do it, and yet it was man who had sinned in the flesh, and so by law it had to be man to pay the price of His sin in the Flesh. How could flesh be guilty, pay the price, and live? The only answer is, by God! His own arm would bring Salvation. He Himself would have to be the Saviour of man. He would have to Come down from heaven and deliver us from the Death that hung over us.

Philippians 2:5

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

- **Who, Being in the form of God**, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
- But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the Form of a servant, and was made in the Likeness of Men:
- And being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
- Wherefore God hath also highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name."

Here we have the Testimony of God saying that Jesus was in the form of God, and being equal to God (Only possible if He WAS God) thought it not robbery to make Himself of no renown and be "Made in the Likeness of man" that He could suffer the death of the cross. Christ in the form of God, making Himself in the form of man, in order to be the promised Saviour of man. And in order to do that, He took on the flesh through Mary. And this is why He is called the Son of God. Because he is God, through seed in Mary revealed in the form of man to be the Saviour of the world.

..He that hath an ear, let him hear.

The fact is, with a little study in the scriptures (and the Holy Spirit) it's very easy to see that Jesus is God. That is to say, if we believe the scriptures themselves and not choose to ignore what they say! For example, God says that He is the First and the Last. Jesus being God, also confirms that in Revelation chapter 1 verse 17 and 18, saying that He is the First and the Last, He is He that

liveth and was dead, and is alive forevermore. Total consistency because Jesus is God. God says,

Isaiah 41:4

- ".I the LORD, the first and the last; I AM He.

Revelation 1:11

- "saying, I AM Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last..."

And when John heard that voice and turned to see who was speaking to him, who did he see? ..He saw Christ in the Midst of the Candlesticks speaking to Him saying, He was alive and was dead and is alive for evermore. This is Jesus Christ the Alpha and Omega, the First and the last. i.e., He is God! There can only be one first and last. If Jehovah God says He is, and Christ says He is, then it's obvious if scripture be true, Jesus is God. No real mystery, because without Christ being God and suffering death for us, there would be no Savior. That is exactly what was Promised in God's Word, and that is exactly what we got. ..the Word made flesh! And we, as the true Church, the Chosen, are the witnesses for we believe that He is our Saviour.

Isaiah 43:10-11

- "Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have Chosen: that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me.
- I, even I AM the Lord; and beside Me, There is No Saviour!"

Reference Philippians 2:6 where Jesus was in the Form of God, and was made in the Likeness of man? And here God tells us there was no God formed before Him, neither shall there be after Him. So all those people talking about some other god in heaven are denying the Word which declares there is no other God formed there that created heaven and earth, neither shall be. There is One God, and Jesus is all the Fullness of the godhead bodily. When we are at peace with the Word, there is no fighting or warfare with it. We simply receive that it says, "other than Jehovah God, there is no Saviour!" Shall we turn around and retort, "NO, Your wrong God, Jesus Christ who is "NOT" you, is our Saviour?" God Forbid! But that is exactly what some people do. The question is, who is right? ..God or man?

Romans 3:4

- "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged".

The fact is (as demonstrated in Isaiah 43:10-11) if God is not our Saviour, then we have NO Saviour! We are in a gospel where the saviour is someone else who cannot Save. Jesus and God are One! When we see Jesus, we see God revealed.

John 14:9

- "...he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father and how sayest thou then, shew us the Father?"

Good question! Very Good Question! They say show us the Father, and Jesus says, when you see Me, you see the Father! Now if Jesus wasn't God, the Father, that would be a "blasphemous" statement. In fact, the Jews of the day understood that (even though many today don't really want to), as they took up stones to stone Him for saying that! ..They Understood what many today refuse to receive.

John 10:30-33

- "I and My Father are One!
- Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.
- Jesus answered them, many good works have I shewed you from My father; for which of those works do ye stone Me?
- The Jews answered Him, saying, for a good work we stone thee not; **but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God.**"

These people here were just like many churches today. They appear very Sincere, but they are sincerely wrong! They understood that Jesus was saying that He was God the father, but what they didn't understand (as many today don't) is that Jesus was indeed God! Therefore, there was no Blasphemy! They thought He was a mere man, perhaps a prophet at the most. But they were wrong. They were men of their convictions, but what was their conviction worth? ..Nothing! The same thing it's worth today if it's not founded upon the Word of God. Did not Jesus say many would say to Him in that day, "Lord, Lord, didn't we do many great works in Thy name?" and He would say, "depart from Me ye who work iniquity.." You see, they may have sincerely thought they were Children of God, but they will be sincerely wrong. They hadn't kept God's Word, and so missed the whole point! Just as these who wanted to stone Jesus

had! They read the scriptures, but they hadn't Heard them. They didn't Receive the Love of Truth.

We need to understand that many have a form of Godliness, but deny the Power thereof. When we deny the Word, we deny the Spirit! For the Spirit of God works with the Word! That's why these people sought to Stone Jesus! The Word was just words to them. It had no power! These people had no justification even from the scriptures, but they sought to stone Christ, choosing to "ignore" the body of evidence of both the scriptures and his Work. Would many today stone Him because He makes himself the Great "I AM?" ..yes, many would! When they deny that He is, do they deny the Word and the Spirit of Truth?

John 8:56-59

- "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My Day: and he saw it and was glad.
- then said the Jews unto Him, thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?
- Jesus said unto them, Verily Verily, I say unto you Before Abraham was, **I AM!**
- then took they up stones to cast at Him.."

Again, CLEARLY, they Knew and they understood He was saying He was God! Unlike many today, they didn't pretend they didn't know what He was saying. But like many today, they thought that He was blaspheming, saying I AM! But the fact is, He was God! He was Before Abraham was, and He was the Great "I AM!" Some simply do not understand these things because they are Spiritually discerned. Did not God say to Moses...

Exodus 3:14

- "...thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, **I AM** hath sent Me unto you."

This is one of the names of God. God is the Great I AM and that is why Jesus could say "Before Abraham was, I AM!" Because He is God! How indeed could He be before Abraham was, "unless" He was God?

John 18:6

- "As soon then as He had said unto them, **I AM** they went backward and fell to the ground."

Does God tell us this simply to indicate that they just happened to stumble just as Jesus was saying this? God Forbid! They fell to the Ground to illustrate the great "I AM" was speaking, and His Word was with Power! Their judgment awaited. As the stones of the Temple they would be cast down at the Word of God. By all rights fire from Heaven should have come down to consume them as He spoke, but that couldn't happen because of the will and purpose of God to go to the Cross. Christ had to go to the Cross willingly with them and be crucified for His People. But they went backward signifying their Judgment at His Word! He is the Great I AM and his Word is with Power and Authority! God has said it in a hundred different ways. But like the Scribes and Pharisees many do not want to hear it! It's certainly not that scripture doesn't make it clear Jesus was God (even though some say it doesn't), it's that some don't want to receive what God says, nor do they have the Spirit which would guide them into the truth of it, which is given by Grace of God.

Hebrews 1:8

- "But unto the Son He saith, Thy Throne O God, is forever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom."

Note that this verse clearly says the Son (Jesus) is God [theos] and the Throne of His kingdom everlasting! How do you have two Kings ruling in one Kingdom of God. God says He alone is God and there shall be no other God after him or before Him. He says he is the First and last. He says His kingdom is forever. Do we have two forever Kingdoms ruled by two separate Gods? No, there is One Kingdom and One Ruler God.

But you cannot force anyone to believe this truth no matter how clear it is written. The mind will rationalize away absolutely anything which it wants. We can only bear witness to the testimony of the truth of scripture.

Titus 2:13

- "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Consistently following God's declaration that besides him, there is no Saviour! Those claiming they have a Saviour that isn't God, simply are deluding themselves. If they have a Saviour who is not God, then they have a saviour which Cannot Save! Again,

Isaiah 45:21

- "...and there is no God else beside Me; a just God and Saviour; there is None Beside Me!"

Hosea 13:4

- "Yet I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt and thou shalt know no God but Me: For there is No Saviour besides Me!"

We shall know no God but Him, and yet some consistently claim that there is another god in heaven from the beginning who created all things, who is not Him. they simply will not receive the witness of Truth of scripture. Nevertheless, it stands for God's people a testimony of righteousness. **Hosea 11:1**

- "When Israel was a child, then I loved Him, and called My Son out of Egypt."

Matthew 2:14

- "When he arose, he took the young Child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:
- and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son."

The Son Israel is Christ, and all in him shall be Saved! Salvation is of Israel! He is "thee" seed to whom the promises were made. Not as to many, but as to ONE. All we have to do is follow scriptures "carefully" via the Spirit, and the truth shows through. And of course this is both logically and Biblically the only way to go. We follow the Word, not try and lead it where we want it to go! When John the Baptist came preparing the way for Christ, He was preparing the way for Jehovah God. Because Jesus was God! Scriptures Confirm this.

Matthew 3:3

- "for this is He that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias (Isaiah) saying, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight."

This is the Fulfilment of the Prophecy of Isaiah,

Isaiah 40:3

- "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God!"

He Prepared the Way for God because Jesus Was God! John had to decrease while Jesus increased. And that word LORD there is [y^hovah] Jehovah. Jesus is Jehovah God who John prepared the way for! This is the true God the latchets of whose shoes John was not worthy to unloose. ..Because He was God!

Luke 3:16

- "John answered saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water, but one Mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to Unloose: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost!"

The only one who can baptize anyone with the Holy Ghost is God! No one else qualifies. Who has control of the Holy Spirit but God who reveals Himself via it? God alone cleanses with the Holy Spirit! i.e., who else can forgive sins but God? ..No One! No one can cleanse us from sin or baptize with the Holy Spirit, but God! And so with the myriad of scriptures confirming that Jesus is God, you wonder what the controversy is all about.

1st John 5:20

- "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal Life."

Jesus Christ is The true God that we are in, and Eternal Life. These things are made very clear to us when we receive what is written in the scriptures. From the very beginning, the Promise was of God coming, not of a man.

Matthew 1:23

- "Behold, a virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God With Us!"

That's what the Word interpreted by God (not man) means. Unfortunately, as is often demonstrated, man doesn't like God's interpretations and wants his own private interpretations. And man's private interpretation is that this was not "God with Us" and all these scriptures (and more) are all misunderstandings by us. Man makes things ambiguous for his own purposes, but Scripture is very clear

on the matter. This Child's name was Prophesied to be God with us, and that's what He was. Names in the scriptures carry great significance, and this is no exception. Consistency is the hallmark of truth, inconsistency and contradiction is the hallmark of error.

Isaiah 9:6

- "For unto us a Child is Born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulders: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

There is no one who would be called the everlasting Father by God, but the Everlasting Father! Did Not Jesus say, call no man Father but your Father in Heaven (Matthew 23:9)? This is what God means! There is One named Everlasting Father, and it is God! Therefore, Jesus being the Mighty God, the Everlasting father, is of course, God! Even doubting Thomas when he put his finger to touch His wounds Confessed, "My Lord and my God!" -John 20:28. ..Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet believe that Jesus is God!

I do want to be careful to stress that I don't mean to put forth the idea that I believe that everyone who has some doubts about the deity of Christ is a demon from hell. I am simply stating that contrary to popular belief, scripture is clear on the matter, and it's a fundamental truth of the historical Church. Yes, there are some legitimate questions that are asked, and these should be addressed honestly by Theologians. Questions Like,

"If God is Jesus, then why does scripture say that God is greater than Christ (John 14:28, I Cor. 11:3)."

That's a legitimate question, but the answer is simple. Jesus says the Father is greater than I, because He left the glory of being God in Heaven and abased Himself to be the suffering servant and be humiliated for us. When He took on the flesh that he could be the propitiation and pay the penalty for sin, He made Himself of no reputation. Still, the Glory that He had in Heaven, he would have again after His Work on the cross, and ascension to the throne. As was explained in verses such as,

John 17:5

- "And now, O Father, Glorify thou Me with Thine own self with the Glory which I had with thee before the world was."

You see, it's no mystery! God revealing Himself to man as the saviour, left the Glory in Heaven to take on the form of man to be the suffering Saviour of man.

It's the same thing as we already read in Philippians chapter 2 of Him being in the form of God, leaving that to be made in the likeness of man of no renown. Again,

Philippians 2:7

- "But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man."

He was in the form of God, equal, and came as the Servant, not as the Glory of the Father! And so of course He says the Father is greater than I. Because God, the Father, is in His Glory, and God revealing Himself as the Son left that Glory He had in the form of the Father, in order to be the Saviour of man and suffer the wrath of that God for us. So though there can be some things hard to understand, there is really no confusion in those statement, considering all of scripture. Of course, there will always be those who take these hard to understand scriptures and wrest them to try and deceive people about other truths. It's to be expected.

2nd Peter 3:16

- "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction".

Another comment that is often made (sarcastically) is that, "if Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. How can God sit besides Himself?" It can be a legitimate question, but it's usually asked mockingly. But the truth is just as scripture declares it to be. There are three in the Godhead, and these three are one. The mystery can be equated (no where near perfectly) to a River of water which at the head forks into three streams. One stream may water the lilies of the field, another stream may go in another direction to wash the dirt off the busy workers of the field, and still another stream may be for thirsty travelers who pass by that way. Still, it's all from "ONE" stream head, But that one head is doing three different tasks simultaneously. The Water is one, but it is for "three purposes". That doesn't mean it has to be three waters, nor that each individual stream of water is not the source water. All three are one well of water but the well manifests it's work in three. It's one source, and one water, but gets it's work done in three. Of course it goes without saying that that is an imperfect analogy (as any would be) but it makes my point. God is one God, but works out his purpose and will in three (see the significance of the number three in scripture, study).

Of course, anyone can ask rhetorical questions. They ask, "How can God be sitting beside Himself"? I can likewise ask, "How can God pass by Moses on the mountain, and yet be on the other side of the World also?" It's the same question really. And yet they believe God passed by Moses and yet was still everywhere present unquestionably, which only proves that their question about the seating on the Throne is one of self justification, not sincere misunderstanding. Anyone can ask these questions. How can God be in China, and in New York at the same time? He's Omnipresent! How can God dwell in Peter, be dwelling in Paul, and John, and making intercession for Luke by His Spirit, and numbering the hairs on our heads and watching the sparrows at the same time? Of the asking of questions there is no end. All is vanity saith the Preacher. These type questions are usually not questions in a search for an answer or knowledge of truth, they're usually mocking, or products of ego/pride and self justification. The mind set is usually one of, "...Let's see him answer this one, or, I'll get him with this one!" Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

If God can do anything, can He make a Rock so big that he Can't lift it?

if you say yes, they say "then if He can't lift a rock, He can't do everything". Likewise if you say no. It's a silly self justifying exercise in vanity. What does this question prove? Answer: Nothing! We could write 10 books asking rhetorical questions, but it doesn't solve the basic question here. Namely, are we going to receive what God actually says, or are we going to wrest or twist His Words until they resemble our words and our doctrines? That is the question! Are we going to accept God's Words as the Words of the Wise, or will we build our own doctrines by what is right in our own eyes.

Ecclesiastes 12:10-14

- "The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.
- The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the Master of assemblies, which are given from One Shepherd.
- And further, by there, my son, be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.
- Let us hear the conclusion of the Whole matter: Fear God, and Keep His Commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.
- For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

Yes, that's the conclusion of the whole matter. Believe what God says. Keep His Word, His commandments! NO, We have no ability to make Christ Lord, He either is LORD or He is not Lord! Christ either established the Kingdom of God, and is King in that kingdom, or we are of all people most foolish. The truth is,

He has established the Kingdom of God. And how is someone ruling as King in the Kingdom of God, who is not God? How is it then the Kingdom of God? The truth as written is, it is the Kingdom of God. And God Rules on the Throne! It's not a Kingdom of this world, and all Christians have a part in it. We have no right to change the laws of the Government because Christendom is not a democracy. It's a Kingdom! ..With a King! We are Servants! And we are Sons by "Grace" not by any Sonship rights. And we worship only God in this kingdom! We come to God the Father through God the Son who makes intercession for us by His Work on the cross. As He has said,

John 10:30 "I and the Father are one."

Here are a few more of many Excellent Bible references to the Deity of Christ!

Colossians 1:15-17
Revelation 1:6
Colossians 2:9
Matthew 28:18
Hebrews 1:1-3
Matthew 4:10
Acts 10:25-26
mark 2:5, 7, 10
1 Timothy 1:16-17
Matthew 22:44-45
Psalm 45:6-7 (w/Heb. 1:8, Rev 6:2, 19:12-13)
Romans 10:9-13
John 5:19
John 5:25
James 1:17
Hebrews 13:6
John 1:4
John 14:6
John 5:23
2 Corinthians 13:14
Matthew 21:16
John 9:38
2 Timothy 4:18
Philippians 2:10
John 1:18
Matthew 20:28

As we saw, John chapter one is an unmistakable statement as to the eternal existence of the Person of the Word of God, Who is God and Who was and is with God the Father, and has been from the beginning. To state (as some do) in

respect of John 1:1 that "the Word was a god is irreverent, derogatory to Christ, and is to commit the heresy. Those who deny the deity of Christ, deny that He is the Saviour, for there is no Saviour but God. Since the Deity of Christ is unquestionably established, there is no need for doubt about His Work, and no problem in accepting His eternalness.

We can and should be very grateful to God who in His Holy Scripture has supplied us with all of the truths that we need.

It follows then that we should take every opportunity to first consult the Scriptures for the guidance we seek, and to rely on them, and trust in God Who has authored and inspired them on our behalf.



Is There A God?

Christian faith is as much *caught*—in the church, in the workplace, and amid the varied joys and trials of this journey we call life—as it is *taught* in the academy. Few people move from living under the wrath of God to knowing the grace of God as the result of a lecture.

Nevertheless, Christian faith is to be taught. We are commanded by our God to love him not only with our heart, soul, and strength, but with our mind as well. Therefore, a lecture on the topic “Is There a God?” is most appropriate in a divinity school. The apostle Peter exhorts us, “In your hearts set apart Christ as

Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander” (1 Pet. 3:15–16).

I am aiming my remarks this evening primarily at those of you who are divinity students or are presently in ministry. I will give you an example of the apologetic methodology known as presuppositionalism. I would contrast it to fideism, which was my grandmother Anna Friebe’s method: “Never question, just believe in Gott.” I would also contrast it to evidentialism, which begins with self-evident reason and gradually builds a case for God’s existence. An example of that method would be Pope John Paul’s recent and learned call for a return to the methods of Thomas Aquinas. This approach led a much admired theologian to spend eight days on a ship arguing the existence of the human soul with a Marxist. He never did get around to speaking of God!

My Presuppositions

I lay my presuppositional cards on the table: I am a committed Christian and have been since about 1956. My argument is circular and assumes the conclusion in the premise: the triune God of the Bible exists and calls you into fellowship with himself.

A corollary to this is that Christianity is not only intellectually defensible, but the *only* worldview available in the marketplace of ideas that is intellectually defensible, internally consistent, and livable—because it *is* the truth. I can conceive of a world without me, I can conceive of God without the universe, but I cannot conceive of me or a universe without God.

With the psalmist let us proclaim, “Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep.... For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light” (Ps. 36:5, 6, 9).

Looking for God

“Is there a god?” is a question asked today in a milieu of doubt, a culture of disbelief so well articulated by Steven Carter of Yale. The same question, when asked, say, at this divinity school in 1798, would not have been considered trivial or marginal by the society at large. Believe it, today most folks “out there” see this question as trivial. And most folks “out there” see your calling as irrelevant. As a pastor, I minister to a generally educated population. When I converse with a nonbeliever about our Christian faith, I generally assume either indifference or articulate opposition on the part of the other person. I am seldom

disappointed. As if they are throwing meat to the jackals (with me being the meat), they will tell me why they are not Christian and often why I should not be a Christian.

We need to ask ourselves what the underlying cultural assumptions are in our time that prompt the question “Is there a god?” Why is the question posed in this way? Does it not assume that I, the questioner, have the right and the ability in some fashion to hold God accountable? I can put God in the dock; I can put my questions to him; I can demand satisfactory answers from him; I can cause this divinity to pass through my net; I can pronounce judgment upon him.

Many well-intentioned Christians and pagans over the past two millennia have sought to put up such a net and induce God to pass through it. The effort to construct a rationally transparent test, syllogism, or experiment to prove God’s existence to believers and nonbelievers alike is as old as it is futile. All too often, the believing effort that begins with Descartes’ “I think; therefore I am” ends with Bertrand Russell’s complaint. When asked what he would say if, after death, he found himself before the Almighty, Professor Russell said his reply would be, “Sir, you did not give me enough proof.”

The cosmonaut Yury Gagarin failed to see a god when he was rocketed into the heavens. Radio telescopes scan the universe, to no avail. Many a net has been fashioned to catch a god (and even an occasional goddess), but to date, none has been snagged. Perhaps the time has come for us Christians to join the secular society and just admit that the question “Is there a god?” cannot be confidently answered in the affirmative.

The Alternative: Nothing

But if we answer that question in the negative, we must also have the courage to admit the death of man and woman as meaningful and moral beings. Dostoyevsky, a Christian, was right when he said, “If God is dead, then everything is permitted.” The exhilaration of freedom from Moses’ Ten Commandments, and from Jesus’ stern sexual ethic, soon dissipates when we think about the ramifications of our negative answer.

I have here a tract from the Humanist Association of Massachusetts. This tract states, “Human experience and reasoning are the sources of meaning and values.... Humankind, as a species, is a special product of the evolutionary process.” The tract quotes the famous humanist Corliss Lamont, who speaks of “the greater good of all humanity” as the basis for ethics. Linus Pauling mentions “service for the good.” Erich Fromm notes, “Humanist ethics...is based on the principle that only humans themselves can determine the criterion of virtue and sin.”

Did I hear that correctly? “Meaning and values”? “Humankind, as a species, is special”? Be serious! “The greater good...service for the good...virtue and sin”? Get real, boys. Your humanist elders should know that you can’t have it both ways. When God dies, so does meaning.

This was brought home to me in a conversation I had with a young man during the height of the Vietnam War. A picture taken on June 8, 1972, was published in, as I recall, *Life Magazine*. Five little Vietnamese children were fleeing for their lives from a U.S. napalm bombing. The little girl in the middle was running toward the camera, totally naked, her mouth wide open, screaming in complete terror. Having seen this picture, the young man raged and railed against the Christian God who permitted what we both agreed were horrible atrocities. He loudly proclaimed his atheism in the face of such horror.

I replied to my new friend, “Being a Christian, I am morally outraged by what was done to those children. But why should you care if the children live or die? When the napalm burns their skin and they become crispy critters, is that not simply a chemical reaction? The meaningless molecules are simply rearranged.” He understood, seeing the nonexistence not only of God, but of all his values, and he walked away in stunned silence.

Have the courage of your convictions. If God does not exist, there is no possibility of value, argument, history, or experience. We are locked into our self-existent skulls, and, as Sartre saw, the only philosophical question is “Why not commit suicide?” The joke is on those who fish for God. As the psalmist said of those who resist God, “Their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.... [They] are ensnared by the work of their hands” (Ps. 9:15–16).

Good News

But we Christians have good news. Not that *a god* exists, not that there is a high *probability* of the divine, but that *the living and true God* calls you by his Spirit into fellowship through his Son, Jesus Christ. We cannot and should not attempt to devise a net in which to catch God; nevertheless, he has left abundant witness to himself. Indeed, God is casting out his gospel net, and he is fishing for us! And we, looking out from within God’s good creation, can confirm his presence and love in many ways.

When I am approached with the question “Is there a god?” I usually respond, “Yes, God is. What would you accept as proof? Would you accept a philosophical proof, a historical proof, or perhaps an existential proof?” Those of you going into ministry should be let in on a secret. Maybe once every decade will you be asked a theological question in pure form. I had been pastoring for six years before this happened to me. Riding the subway in Philadelphia, a

friend and I were going over a class we had just presented in the city. A young woman tapped me on the shoulder and said, “I’ve been eavesdropping. I want to know how to become a Christian. I am ready. What must I do? I get off in two stops, so please be quick about it!”

A Philosophical Proof

I have attempted in this little talk to give you a philosophical argument for the existence of God. With Anselm, I believe in order that I may understand. There is no such thing as a merely abstract, purely intellectual knowledge of God. All knowledge, including all knowledge of God, exists in relationship to God. This is so because we all live in God’s creation. “The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge” (Ps. 19:1–2 NASB).

This is so because we are all created in God’s image. “For when the Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them” (Rom. 2:14–15 NASB). “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools” (Rom. 1:18–22 NASB).

You are therefore already from birth without excuse. You can deny God only because God has created the conditions of existence that make such a denial possible. Your position is that of a baby who, in order to slap old Dad in the face, must be held up in his arms. You are, we all are, without excuse. Whether or not you agree with or even follow this argument, *you already know* in the depths of your personality that the true God *is*, and you know at this moment whether you are or are not in fellowship with him.

A Historical Proof: Prophecy

The three hundred or so prophecies of the Bible have always been of great comfort to the church as she faces the world, proclaiming her God. They begin with the veiled prot-evangelium of Genesis 3:15, where it is foretold that the seed of the woman will crush the head of the serpent. They conclude in the Old

Testament at Malachi 3:1–4: “ ‘See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,’ says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years.” The history of biblical prophecy and hand-in-glove fulfilment has been and is today a compelling proof of the truth of our holy faith.

A contemporary example is found in a young, Jewish, very secular psychologist, who, on hearing the reading of Isaiah 52:13–53:12, shot back, “What’s so impressive about that? Anyone standing at the foot of the cross could have written that.” He was amazed to learn that the passage had been penned centuries before Jesus’ crucifixion. It was the beginning of the end of his secularism. Today Dr. Rich Ganz is a Christian.

A Historical Proof: The Resurrection

The jewel in the crown of Christian proofs is the resurrection of Jesus. Paul preached the resurrection of Jesus to convince pagans of the truth of Christianity. “ ‘But I have had God’s help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen—that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.’ At this point Festus interrupted Paul’s defense. ‘You are out of your mind, Paul!’ he shouted. ‘Your great learning is driving you insane.’ ‘I am not insane, most excellent Festus,’ Paul replied. ‘What I am saying is true and reasonable. The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.’ Then Agrippa said to Paul, ‘Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?’ Paul replied, ‘Short time or long—I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains’” (Acts 26:22–29).

Neither King Agrippa nor Festus became a believer. But the fact of the Resurrection turned twelve men cowering in an upper room into fearless preachers of the Resurrection—even at the cost of their lives. Many have been moved from wrath to grace by the weight of this proof.

In a book that became a best seller, *Who Moved the Stone?* Frank Morison, a lawyer, tells how he was brought up in a rationalistic environment and came to the opinion that the Resurrection was nothing but a fairy-tale happy ending which spoiled a great story about Jesus. Therefore, he planned to write an account of the last tragic days of Jesus, allowing the full horror of the crime and the full heroism of Jesus to shine through. He would, of course, omit any suspicion of the miraculous, and would utterly discount the Resurrection. But when he came to study the facts with care, he had to change his mind, and he wrote his book on the other side, the side of belief. His first chapter, significantly, is entitled “The Book That Refused to Be Written.”

An Existential Proof

Personal experience is not subject to critical examination in the same way that historical proof is, but one’s experience is often the most compelling factor in belief. There are many millions of Christians at present. They could be having a group hallucination along with millions of others down through the past two millennia, but the farmer’s argument, “Don’t tell me there is no God; I spoke with him this morning!” carries a certain value.

Here is a challenge. If you are asked, “Is there a god?” invite the inquirer to ask God. God calls you and each of us through his servant Jeremiah: “ ‘Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,’ declares the Lord” (Jer. 29:12–14). I can assure you that the living God not only exists, but seeks your fellowship. As a youth, I read these words of the prophet and took up the challenge, and God answered me. He will answer you as well.

The Divinity of Christ

The doctrine of Christ's divinity is the central Christian doctrine, for it is like a skeleton key that opens all the others. Christians have not independently reasoned out and tested each of the teachings of Christ received via Bible and Church, but believe them all on his authority. For if Christ is divine, He can be trusted to be infallible in everything He said, even hard things like exalting suffering and poverty, forbidding divorce, giving his Church the authority to teach and forgive sins in his name, warning about hell (very often and very seriously), instituting the scandalous sacrament of eating his flesh—we often forget how many "hard sayings" he taught!

When the first Christian apologists began to give a reason for the faith that was in them to unbelievers, this doctrine of Christ's divinity naturally came under

attack, for it was almost as incredible to Gentiles as it was scandalous to Jews. That a man who was born out of a woman's womb and died on a cross, a man who got tired and hungry and angry and agitated and wept at his friend's tomb, that this man who got dirt under his fingernails should be God was, quite simply, the most astonishing, incredible, crazy-sounding idea that had ever entered the mind of man in all human history.

The argument the early apologists used to defend this apparently indefensible doctrine has become a classic one. C.S. Lewis used it often, e.g. in *Mere Christianity*, the book that convinced Chuck Colson (and thousands of others). I once spent half a book (*Between Heaven and Hell*) on this one argument alone. It is the most important argument in Christian apologetics, for once an unbeliever accepts the conclusion of this argument (that Christ is divine), everything else in the Faith follows, not only intellectually (Christ's teachings must all then be true) but also personally (if Christ is God, He is also your total Lord and Saviour).

The argument, like all effective arguments, is extremely simple: Christ was either God or a bad man.

Unbelievers almost always say he was a good man, not a bad man; that he was a great moral teacher, a sage, a philosopher, a moralist, and a prophet, not a criminal, not a man who deserved to be crucified. But a good man is the one thing he could not possibly have been according to simple common sense and logic. For he *claimed* to be God. He said, "Before Abraham was, I Am", thus speaking the word no Jew dares to speak because it is God's own private name, spoken by God himself to Moses at the burning bush. Jesus wanted everyone to believe that he was God. He wanted people to worship him. He claimed to forgive everyone's sins against everyone. (Who can do that but God, the One offended in every sin?)

Now what would we think of a person who went around making these claims today? Certainly not that he was a good man or a sage. There are only two possibilities: he either speaks the truth or not. If he speaks the truth, he is God and the case is closed. We must believe him and worship him. If he does not speak the truth, then he is not God but a mere man. But a mere man who wants you to worship him as God is not a good man. He is a very bad man indeed, either morally or intellectually. If he knows that he is not God, then he is morally bad, a liar trying deliberately to deceive you into blasphemy. If he does not know that he is not God, if he sincerely thinks he is God, then he is intellectually bad—in fact, insane. A measure of your insanity is the size of the gap between what you think you are and what you really are. If I think I am the greatest philosopher in America, I am only an arrogant fool; if I think I am

Napoleon, I am probably over the edge; if I think I am a butterfly, I am fully embarked from the sunny shores of sanity. But if I think I am God, I am even more insane because the gap between anything finite and the infinite God is even greater than the gap between any two finite things, even a man and a butterfly.

Josh McDowell summarized the argument simply and memorably in the trilemma "Lord, liar, or lunatic?" Those are the only options. Well, then, why not liar or lunatic? But almost no one who has read the Gospels can honestly and seriously consider that option. The savviness, the canniness, the human wisdom, the attractiveness of Jesus emerge from the Gospels with unavoidable force to any but the most hardened and prejudiced reader. Compare Jesus with liars like the Reverend Sun Myung Moon or lunatics like the dying Nietzsche. Jesus has in abundance precisely those three qualities that liars and lunatics most conspicuously lack:

1. His practical wisdom, his ability to read human hearts, to understand people and the real, unspoken question behind their words, his ability to heal people's spirits as well as their bodies;
2. His deep and winning love, his passionate compassion, his ability to attract people and make them feel at home and forgiven, his authority, "not as the scribes"; and above all
3. His ability to astonish, his unpredictability, his creativity. Liars and lunatics are all so dull and predictable! No one who knows both the Gospels and human beings can seriously entertain the possibility that Jesus was a liar or a lunatic, a bad man.

No, the unbeliever almost always believes that Jesus was a good man, a prophet, a sage. Well then, if he was a sage, you can trust him and believe the essential things he says. And the essential thing he says is that he is the divine Savior of the world and that you must come to him for salvation. If he is a sage, you must accept his essential teaching as true. If his teaching is false, then he is not a sage. The strength of this argument is that it is not merely a logical argument about concepts; it is about Jesus. It invites people to read the Gospels and get to know this man. The premise of the argument is the character of Jesus, the human nature of Jesus. The argument has its feet on the earth. But it takes you to heaven, like Jacob's ladder (which Jesus said meant him: Gen 28:12; Jn 1:51). Each rung follows and holds together. The argument is logically airtight; there is simply no way out.

What, then, do people say when confronted with this argument? Often, they simply confess their prejudices: "Oh, I just can't believe that!" (But if it has been proved to be true, you must believe it if you really seek the truth!)

Sometimes, they go away, like many of Jesus' contemporaries, wondering and shaking their heads and thinking. That is perhaps the very best result you can hope for. The ground has been softened up and plowed. The seed has been sown. God will give the increase.

But if they know some modern theology, they have one of two escapes. Theology has an escape; common sense does not. Common sense is easily convertible. It is the theologians, now as then, who are the hardest to convert. The **first** escape is the attack of the Scripture "scholars" on the historical reliability of the Gospels. Perhaps Jesus never claimed to be divine. Perhaps all the embarrassing passages were inventions of the early Church (say "Christian community"—it sounds nicer).

In that case, who invented traditional Christianity if not Christ? A lie, like a truth, must originate somewhere. Peter? The twelve? The next generation? What was the motive of whoever first invented the myth (euphemism for lie)? What did they get out of this elaborate, blasphemous hoax? For it must have been a deliberate lie, not a sincere confusion. No Jew confuses Creator with creature, God with man. And no man confuses a dead body with a resurrected, living one. Here is what they got out of their hoax. Their friends and families scorned them. Their social standing, possessions, and political privileges were stolen from them by both Jews and Romans. They were persecuted, imprisoned, whipped, tortured, exiled, crucified, eaten by lions, and cut to pieces by gladiators. So some silly Jews invented the whole elaborate, incredible lie of Christianity for absolutely no reason, and millions of Gentiles believed it, devoted their lives to it, and died for it—for no reason. It was only a fantastic practical joke, a hoax. Yes, there is a hoax indeed, but the perpetrators of it are the twentieth-century theologians, not the Gospel writers.

The **second** escape (notice how eager we are to squirm out of the arms of God like a greased pig) is to Orientalise Jesus, to interpret him not as the unique God-man but as one of many mystics or "adepts" who realized his own inner divinity just as a typical Hindu mystic does. This theory takes the teeth out of his claim to divinity, for he only realized that everyone is divine. The problem with that theory is simply that Jesus was not a Hindu but a Jew! When he said "God", neither he nor his hearers meant Brahman, the impersonal, pantheistic, immanent all; he meant Yahweh, the personal, theistic, transcendent Creator. It is utterly unhistorical to see Jesus as a mystic, a Jewish guru. He taught prayer, not meditation. His God is a person, not a pudding. He said he was God but not that everyone was. He taught sin and forgiveness, as no guru does. He said nothing about the "illusion" of individuality, as the mystics do.

Attack each of these evasions—Jesus as the good man. Jesus as the lunatic, Jesus as the liar, Jesus as the man who never claimed divinity, Jesus as the mystic—take away these flight squares, and there is only one square left for the unbeliever's king to move to. And on that square waits checkmate. And a joyous mating it is. The whole argument is really a wedding invitation.



The Law

I believe the traditional Reformed distinction between the Moral, the Ceremonial, and the Civil Law is helpful. In that scheme, I presume *identity* between the testaments with regard to the Moral law, and *continuity* with regard to the Ceremonial and Civil law. You may recall that Greg Bahnsen's approach was to presume continuity between the Testaments unless otherwise instructed by the New.¹ What I'm saying may sound similar but it isn't. Let me explain.

Bahnsen was comfortable saying the Ceremonial law had been clearly abrogated in the New Testament. Therefore it did not have "continuity" in the sense in which he meant that term (though he did argue for a *sort* of continuity that I'll deal with in a moment). Bahnsen then tended to lump the Civil and the Moral law together as a single unit. He would then argue that the law was rooted in God's very nature and therefore only God can make changes in it. There is no small error herein.

Let's tease out the missing premise:

- **Major Premise:** The law is rooted in God's unchanging character.
Conclusion: Only God can change the law.

Only one premise can bridge the gap between the Major Premise and the conclusion:

- **Major Premise:** The law is rooted in God's unchanging character.
minor premise: Only God can change his character
Conclusion: Only God can change the law.

To speak of God as changing a law that is rooted in his character is to speak of God changing that character itself. I cannot accept that idea.

Therefore, I do much more than merely *presume continuity* between the law of the Old and New Testament. I *demand identity* or my God is mutable and therefore no God at all. In other words, I am not open to the possibility that God could suddenly say it's okay to murder under the New Covenant. God *cannot* say such a thing because God cannot change. The contents of the Moral Law in the Old and New Testaments must be *identical*.

So when we even leave ourselves open to the *possibility* that an Old Testament law may be changed by the New Testament, we are speaking of an entirely different sort of law. The moment we speak of a law that remains the same *unless* it is changed, we are speaking of a law that is not rooted in God's character. We are speaking of a law that is arbitrarily (though not capriciously) decided by him. We are speaking of a law like the law forbidding Adam to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There was nothing inherent in the fruit that *required* God to forbid its consumption. But as soon as he forbade it, it became immoral to consume it.

So of the Civil Law -- the law of the government of the state of Israel -- we must say one of two things: 1) Either it is rooted in God's character and is changeless (which our Confession, in accordance with Scripture, denies), or 2) It is not rooted in God's character and is therefore changeable. This is the position to which I hold.

Nevertheless I can say that I presume (even demand) continuity between Old and New Testaments with respect to the Civil and the Ceremonial law. Those laws, I believe, were given typologically. They were types of the Worship of heaven as directed by and toward Christ, the High Priest and Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. And they were types of the Kingdom of heaven as ruled by Christ the King. Therefore, every ceremonial and every civil law must speak to me of something that is true in the heavenly realm to which our worship of Christ and his rule of the church pertains.

Let's consider one example that may help to explain what I'm saying:

⁷Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? ⁸Do I say these things as a man? Or does not the law say the same also? ⁹For it is written in the law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE AN OX WHILE IT TREADS OUT THE GRAIN." Is it oxen God is concerned about? ¹⁰Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. ¹¹If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?... ¹³Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? ¹⁴Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

1 Corinthians 9:7-14

His eye is on the sparrow but he doesn't care for oxen. We must distinguish the senses in which God does and doesn't care about oxen. God provides for the ox as much as for the sparrow, and to the extent that the Old Testament case law administered that provision, God was indeed concerned for oxen. But only incidentally. Paul boldly tells us that the purpose of that law is not to provide for the oxen, any more than the dietary laws were enacted to spare the lives of pigs and crustaceans. The statement that God does not care for oxen does not refer to God's providential care but to the typological purpose of his law.

And what is that purpose? Paul answers, "Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written" (9:10a). And this language calls to mind a later passage in which Paul expresses a similar sentiment concerning the history of Israel in the Exodus: "Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11). In both cases Paul makes the startling claim that the Old Testament was written for the sake of New Testament believers. The initial referents have typological significance; they find their fulfilment at the ends of the ages in Christ, his ministers, and his church.

Paul assumes that the *whole* Old Testament has significance for and reference to believers in the New Testament church. So back in the original argument in 1 Corinthians 9, he demonstrates that ministers of the gospel ought to be paid by adducing the same principle from two different sources: 1) The civil law, and 2) the ceremonial law. We have discussed the first. Paul further confirms his point with the second: those who serve at the altar partake of its offerings. This also was not written merely for the sakes of earthly priests ministering in shadows destined to perish. This also was no doubt for our sakes as well.

Paul jealously guards the Old Testament in its typological, foreshadowing function that not a drop of its revelation should escape the mouths of those for whom it was originally intended -- the citizens of the realized eschatological kingdom of God. The ends of the ages have come. Those best equipped to understand what the ceremonial and civil law pointed to have been re-created in Christ. It would be a shame if such a people at such a time dismissed the smallest portion of the law as irrelevant. If such an audience will not heed the law, there was little point in writing it. Greg Bahnsen is certainly right to argue for the abiding validity of the law in exhaustive detail.

But he is wrong, then, to parcel out a portion of this law -- the civil -- to the heathen nations that it should become the inheritance of an earthly kingdom. He has sold our inheritance for a pot of stew. And we, as the legitimate legatees, must cry foul. We must retrieve our inheritance and put it to its intended purpose, understanding the administration of the kingdom of God.

Notice how Paul does this so casually and thoroughly in the above quoted passage. His first argument that ministers of the gospel ought to be supported comes from the civil law, but he doesn't draw attention to that fact. "Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit?" Paul asks (1 Corinthians 9:7). In saying this, Paul inevitably calls to mind Deuteronomy 20:5,6: "Then the officers shall speak to the people, saying: '...What man is there who has planted a vineyard and has not eaten of it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it.'"

A theonomist such as John Cotton -- if I may use the term anachronistically -- looks at this verse and sees in it a principle for contemporary civil polity. He establishes this principle in his *Abstract of the Laws of New England*: "Men...such as have newly built or planted, and not received the fruits of their labour...are not to be pressed or forced against their wills to go forth to wars" (*Theonomy*, p. 569). Bahnsen presents this *Abstract* with the caveat that not all of Cotton's applications are valid. By this he means, e.g. that the Old Testament didn't always punish perjury with death so we shouldn't either, and that wage and price controls may not be a legitimate application of the civil law. But in principle, Bahnsen and Cotton agree. A law such as the one in Deuteronomy 20:6 about who should not go to war ought to be heeded today by lawmakers in an earthly, civil government. That is the purpose of the law.

Nothing could be farther from Paul's mind. He takes the same law and deduces from it that the spiritual laborer has a right to derive benefit from his labors. He goes on to insist that this commandment comes from God and does not derive merely from an appeal to reason: "Do I say these things as a man?" (1 Cor 9:8a) he asks, "Or does not the law say the same also?" He then appeals to the law that the ox must not be muzzled while treading out the grain. He confirms by this

method that the payment of ministers comes not as a human invention to meet a unique New Testament situation, but as a command of God via the Old Testament civil law.

Paul waxes bolder. God, in making a law about oxen, was not concerned about oxen. With the brazen confidence with which he declares that the rock in the wilderness was Christ, Paul coöpts this verse to what seems an entirely new purpose. More brazen still, he claims that this purpose is more basic than the purpose of protecting oxen. And most brazen of all, he claims that this purpose is the only purpose the law *ever* had. The rest is typology. God is not concerned about oxen at all.

In saying this Paul addresses and quashes the easiest theonomic response; namely, that the general equity of a civil law merits many applications and the proof of one application as correct does no discredit to another. In other words, Deuteronomy 20:6 can mean both that spiritual laborers have a right to the fruit of their labors *and* that soldiers in the pay of the civil government should not be conscripted into service if they are in their first year as farmers. Paul replies that the civil law exists for the exclusive use of the Kingdom of Christ. It has no reference to an earthly civil government whose citizenship comprises a mixture of professed believers and professed unbelievers.

The glory of the Old Testament was veiled in shadow; let us not mistake the shadow for the glory. Paul discards the shadow (a law about oxen) as that which belongs to an administration that is passing away. Paul exults, then, in the glory that bursts forth when the shadow is gone. Finally, the civil law (and all typological law) has come into its own.

Bahnsen often refers to "the Older Testament," presumably as a rhetorical device to emphasize the continuity of the covenant of grace throughout its administrations. Well and good. But I would be as justified -- if not more so -- to refer to the New Testament as "the Better Testament" to emphasize the superiority of the current administration. Their eschatology was unrealized; ours is realized. Jesus has indeed mediated a better covenant. How glorious to be a member of the Church of the Firstborn, a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, a worker in the vineyard of the church, a creature of the new creation! Is it any wonder that the laws of the *kingdom* of Old Testament Israel should find themselves as wonderfully transformed, as satisfyingly *realized* as the laws of the Old Testament *church*?²

Indeed as I mentioned earlier, Paul adduces the same principle from the civil and the ceremonial law: spiritual labourers are worthy of support. Not only the law about oxen but the law about priests at the altar demonstrates this principle. Paul does this not merely to pile proof upon proof but to show that the civil and the

ceremonial have the same kind of realization, a realization in the New Testament church which is also the kingdom of God.

The civil and the ceremonial law are identical in this respect: their shadowy administrations have ended that their abiding validity might shine more clearly. God is not concerned about literal altars and shadowy priests but about the true altar in heaven and about Jesus the High Priest and the priestly ministers of his word.³ In precisely the same way, God is not concerned about literal kings and earthly kingdoms but about the heavenly kingdom of Christ which is forever and ever.

The kingdom has begun to come in. We await now the naturalization of all those destined to be citizens of that kingdom that he who has been crowned with glory and honour might consummate his kingdom and visibly rule. The people of God have been constituted both as worshipers of the Saviour and subjects of the King. It is natural for the New Testament to speak of us as "a royal priesthood", as those who have come as worshipers to "Mount Zion...the general assembly and church of the Firstborn", as those who are growing "into a holy temple in the Lord [and a] dwelling place of God in the Spirit." It is equally natural for the New Testament to speak of us as "a chosen nation," those who have come "to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," and as "fellow citizens with the saints." Readers who recognize the above 6 quotations will know that they come not from 6 different passages but 3 (1 Peter 2:9, Hebrews 12:23, Ephesians 3:19-22.). In each case the people of God are described both as a church and as a state. We were once "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel *and* strangers from the covenants of promise" (Ephesians 2:12, emphasis mine). No longer.

This is why Paul may strengthen his argument that ministers are worthy of support by appealing to believers both as participants in a heavenly *cultus* and citizens of a heavenly body politic.

We cannot then eschatologize the Old Testament church and *deeschatologize* the Old Testament state. The *cultus* of the Old Testament was one of unrealized eschatology, now superseded by a *cultus* of *realized* eschatology. Therefore the ceremonial laws, fulfilled in Christ the Savior, remain valid as laws that have come into their own. They have changed in a sense as much as the resurrection body will be a change from the current one. But the resurrection body is the same body and the ceremonial laws are the same laws. In fact, the illustration is a happy one. The ceremonial laws have reference to that heavenly realm where the resurrected Christ forever intercedes for his saints.

It's the same with the kingdom. Christ came to establish a heavenly kingdom, to bring his citizens up to participate by faith in that resurrection realm, to await

the consummation when we shall see the glories of that kingdom with resurrected eyes. The laws of that kingdom are the same as the laws of the Old Testament kingdom, caught up and transformed in the glory of the resurrected King. I don't believe, then, that we can apply the civil law to an *unrealized non-eschatological* kingdom, a kingdom destined to perish.

Where the difficulty comes in in all this is in *mixtures* of ceremonial and moral or civil and moral law. How do I determine which part of the law is moral (and therefore identical with the law today) and which part is arbitrary? Take the case of the Sabbath. Clearly, it is a moral requirement that "a due proportion of time be set aside for the worship of God" (WCF 23.7). And just as clearly the day of the week is not a *moral* requirement. By that I don't mean that we can worship on any day we choose, but that the day (first or last of the week) is not so rooted in God's character that he may not change it at his discretion. He *has* changed the day. But what about the *interval* of one day in seven. Is that moral or positive (i.e. changeable at God's discretion)? I tend to think it's positive. I believe God could have created the world in 8 days and rested the 9 and made the interval 1 day out of 9. (And the days could each be thirty hours long.) I don't believe this would do violence to God's character. But I'm not yet sure how to prove that.

I accept the tripartite distinction of moral-civil-ceremonial as pedagogically valid. But I find it more helpful to refer to the ceremonial laws as a genus with two species -- civil and cultic. And then I set the entire genus off as fundamentally different from the moral law.

Bahnsen suggests that it is not enough to prove that the civil laws were typological; one must additionally prove that they were therefore not of abiding validity. But this is to misunderstand typology. The very nature of typology is that when that which is perfect comes, the partial is done away with. This is true of all ceremonial law, whether civil or cultic.

Nevertheless we can deduce valid principles of worship from the ceremonies. I agree that the story of the Sons of Aaron establishes and vividly portrays the regulative principle. It therefore applies to today, even though we don't use incense in the New Testament church. In the same way the civil law can and should provide legitimate principles of ecclesiastical jurisprudence. And in fact it does when Paul talks about oxen or when he says we shouldn't receive an accusation against an elder except on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Indeed, from the civil law, I would argue we mustn't receive accusations against *any* church member except on such testimony. Paul is making an implicit *a fortiori* argument from that obvious fact to the narrower situation of receiving accusations against elders.



The Christian Family

Divorce and Remarriage

All of my adult life, until I was faced with the necessity of dealing with divorce and remarriage in the pastoral context, I held the prevailing Protestant view that remarriage after divorce was Biblically sanctioned in cases where divorce had resulted from desertion or persistent adultery. Only when I was compelled, some years ago, in teaching through the gospel of Luke, to deal with Jesus' absolute statement in Luke 16:18 did I begin to question that inherited position.

I felt an immense burden in having to teach my congregation what the revealed will of God is in this matter of divorce and remarriage. I was not unaware that among my people there were those who had been divorced and remarried, and those who had been divorced and remained unmarried, and those who were in the process of divorce or contemplating it as a possibility. I knew that this was not an academic exercise, but would immediately affect many people very deeply.

I was also aware of the horrendous statistics in my own country Belgium, as well as other Western countries, concerning the number of marriages that were ending in divorce, and the numbers of people who were forming second marriages and third marriages. In my study of Ephesians 5 I had become increasingly persuaded that there is a deep and profound significance to the union of husband and wife in "one flesh" as a parable of the relationship between Christ and his church.

All of these things conspired to create a sense of solemnity and seriousness as I weighed the meaning and the implication of the Biblical texts on divorce and remarriage. The upshot of that crucial experience was the discovery of what I believe is a New Testament prohibition of all remarriage except in the case where a spouse has died. I do not claim to have seen or said the last word on this issue, nor am I above correction, should I prove to be wrong. I am aware that men more godly than I have taken different views. Nevertheless, every person and church must teach and live according to the dictates of its own conscience informed by a serious study of Scripture.

Therefore this paper is an attempt to state my own understanding of the issues and their foundation in Scripture. It serves, then, as a Biblical rationale for why I feel constrained to make the decisions I do with regard to whose marriages I will perform and what sort of church discipline seems appropriate in regard to divorce and remarriage.

If I were to give exhaustive expositions of each relevant text the paper would become a very large book. Therefore, what I plan to do is to give brief explanations of each of the crucial texts with some key exegetical arguments. There will be, no doubt, many questions that can be raised and I hope to be able to learn from those questions, and do my best to answer them in the discussion that will surround this paper.

It seems that the most efficient way to approach the issue is to simply give a list of reasons, based on Biblical texts, why I believe that the New Testament prohibits all remarriage except where a spouse has died. So what follows is a list of such arguments.

Eleven Reasons Why I Believe All Remarriage After Divorce Is Prohibited While Both Spouses Are Alive

1. Luke 16:18 calls all remarriage after divorce adultery.

Luke 16:18: Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.

1.1 This verse shows that Jesus does not recognize divorce as terminating a marriage in God's sight. The reason a second marriage is called adultery is because the first one is considered to still be valid. So Jesus is taking a stand against the Jewish culture in which all divorce was considered to carry with it the right of remarriage.

1.2 The second half of the verse shows that not merely the divorcing man is guilty of adultery when he remarries, but also any man who marries a divorced woman.

1.3 Since there are no exceptions mentioned in the verse, and since Jesus is clearly rejecting the common cultural conception of divorce as including the right of remarriage, the first readers of this gospel would have been hard-put to argue for any exceptions on the basis that Jesus shared the cultural assumption that divorce for unfaithfulness or desertion freed a spouse for remarriage.

2. Mark 10:11-12 call all remarriage after divorce adultery whether it is the husband or the wife who does the divorcing.

Mark 10:11-12: And he said to them, 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; ¹² and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.'

2.1 This text repeats the first half of Luke 16:18 but goes farther and says that not only the man who divorces, but also a woman who divorces, and then remarries is committing adultery.

2.2 As in Luke 16:18, there are no exceptions mentioned to this rule.

3. Mark 10:2-9 and Matthew 19:3-8 teach that Jesus rejected the Pharisees' justification of divorce from Deuteronomy 24:1 and reasserted the purpose of God in creation that no human being separate what God has joined together.

Mark 10:2-9: And some Pharisees came up to Him, testing Him, and began to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife. ³ And He answered and said to them, 'What did Moses command you?' ⁴ And they said, 'Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.' ⁵ But Jesus said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. ⁶ But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. ⁷ For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, ⁸ and the two shall become one flesh; consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.'

Matthew 19:3-9: And some Pharisees came to Him, testing Him, and saying, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?" ⁴ And He answered and said, "Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'? ⁶ Consequently they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." ⁷ They said to Him, "Why then did

Moses command to give her a certificate and divorce her?" ⁸ He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. ⁹ And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another commits adultery."

3.1 In both Matthew and Mark the Pharisees come to Jesus and test him by asking him whether it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife. They evidently have in mind the passage in Deuteronomy 24:1 which simply describes divorce as a fact rather than giving any legislation in favor of it. They wonder how Jesus will take a position with regard to this passage.

3.2 Jesus' answer is, "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives" (Mt. 19:8).

3.3 But then Jesus criticizes the Pharisees' failure to recognize in the books of Moses God's deepest and original intention for marriage. So he quotes two passages from Genesis. "God made them male and female. ...For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" (Genesis 1:27; 2:24).

3.4 From these passages in Genesis Jesus concludes, "So they are no longer two, but one." And then he makes his climaxing statement, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

3.5 The implication is that Jesus rejects the Pharisees' use of Deuteronomy 24:1 and raises the standard of marriage for his disciples to God's original intention in creation. He says that none of us should try to undo the "one-flesh" relationship which God has united.

3.6 Before we jump to the conclusion that this absolute statement should be qualified in view of the exception clause ("except for unchastity") mentioned in Matthew 19:9, we should seriously entertain the possibility that the exception clause in Matthew 19:9 should be understood in the light of the absolute statement of Matthew 19:6, ("let no man put asunder") especially since the verses that follow this conversation with the Pharisees in Mark 10 do not contain any exception when they condemn remarriage. More on this below.

4. Matthew 5:32 does not teach that remarriage is lawful in some cases. Rather it reaffirms that marriage after divorce is adultery, even for those who have been divorced innocently, and that a man who divorces his wife is guilty of the adultery of her second marriage unless she had already become an adulteress before the divorce.

Matthew 5:32: But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

4.1 Jesus assumes that in most situations in that culture a wife who has been put away by a husband will be drawn into a second marriage. Nevertheless, in spite of these pressures, he calls this second marriage adultery.

4.2 The remarkable thing about the first half of this verse is that it plainly says that the remarriage of a wife who has been innocently put away is nevertheless adultery: "Everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, makes her (the innocent wife who has not been unchaste) an adulteress." This is a clear statement, it seems to me, that remarriage is wrong not merely when a person is guilty in the process of divorce, but also when a person is innocent. In other words, Jesus' opposition to remarriage seems to be based on the unbreakableness of the marriage bond by anything but death.

4.3 I will save my explanation of the exception clause ("Except on the ground of unchastity") for later in the paper, but for now, it may suffice to say that on the traditional interpretation of the clause, it may simply mean that a man makes his wife an adulteress except in the case where she has made herself one.

4.4 I would assume that since an innocent wife who is divorced commits adultery when she remarries, therefore a guilty wife who remarries after divorce is all the more guilty. If one argues that this guilty woman is free to remarry, while the innocent woman who has been put away is not, just because the guilty woman's adultery has broken the "one flesh" relationship, then one is put in the awkward position of saying to an innocent divorced woman, "If you now commit adultery it will be lawful for you to remarry." This seems wrong for at least two reasons.

4.41 It seems to elevate the physical act of sexual intercourse to be the decisive element in marital union and disunion.

4.42 If sexual union with another breaks the marriage bond and legitimizes remarriage, then to say that an innocently divorced wife can't remarry (as Jesus does say) assumes that her divorcing husband is not divorcing to have sexual relations with another. This is a very unlikely assumption. More likely is that Jesus does assume some of these divorcing husbands will have sexual relations with another woman, but still the wives they have divorced may not remarry. Therefore, adultery does not nullify the "one-flesh" relationship of marriage and both the innocent and guilty spouses are prohibited from remarriage in Matthew 5:32.

5. 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 teaches that divorce is wrong but that if it is inevitable the person who divorces should not remarry.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11: To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord, that the wife should not separate from her husband ¹¹ (but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband)—and that the husband should not divorce his wife.

5.1 When Paul says that this charge is not his but the Lord's, I think he means that he is aware of a specific saying from the historical Jesus which addressed this issue. As a matter of fact, these verses look very much like Mark 10:11-12, because both the wife and the husband are addressed. Also, remarriage seems to be excluded by verse 11 the same way it is excluded in Mark 10:11-12.

5.2 Paul seems to be aware that separation will be inevitable in certain cases. Perhaps he has in mind a situation of unrepentant adultery, or desertion, or brutality. But in such a case he says that the person who feels constrained to separate should not seek remarriage but remain single. And he reinforces the authority of this statement by saying he has a word from the Lord. Thus Paul's interpretation of Jesus' sayings is that remarriage should not be pursued.

5.3 As in Luke 16:18 and Mark 10:11-12 and Matthew 5:32, this text does not explicitly entertain the possibility of any exceptions to the prohibition of remarriage.

6. 1 Corinthians 7:39 and Romans 7:1-3 teach that remarriage is legitimate only after the death of a spouse.

1 Corinthians 7:39: A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If the husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

Romans 7:1-3, Do you not know, brethren—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only during his life? ² Thus a married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning her husband. ³ Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies she is free from that law, if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

6.1 Both of these passages (1 Corinthians 7:39; Romans 7:2) say explicitly that a woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. No exceptions are explicitly mentioned that would suggest she could be free from her husband to remarry on any other basis.

7. Matthew 19:10-12 teaches that special Christian grace is given by God to Christ's disciples to sustain them in singleness when they renounce remarriage according to the law of Christ.

Matthew 19:10-12: The disciples said to him, 'If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry.'¹¹ But he said to them, 'Not all men can receive this precept, but only those to whom it is given.'¹² For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it.

7.1 Just preceding this passage in Matthew 19:9 Jesus prohibited all remarriage after divorce. (I will deal with the meaning of "except for immorality" below.) This seemed like an intolerable prohibition to Jesus' disciples: If you close off every possibility of remarriage, then you make marriage so risky that it would be better not to marry, since you might be "trapped" to live as a single person to the rest of your life or you may be "trapped" in a bad marriage.

7.2 Jesus does not deny the tremendous difficulty of his command. Instead, he says in verse 11, that the enablement to fulfill the command not to remarry is a divine gift to his disciples. Verse 12 is an argument that such a life is indeed possible because there are people who for the sake of the kingdom, as well as lower reasons, have dedicated themselves to live a life of singleness.

7.3 Jesus is not saying that some of his disciples have the ability to obey his command not to remarry and some don't. He is saying that the mark of a disciple is that they receive a gift of continence while non-disciples don't. The evidence for this is 1) the parallel between Matthew 19:11 and 13:11, 12) the parallel between Matthew 19:12 and 13:9,43; 11:15, and 3) the parallel between Matthew 19:11 and 19:26.

8. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 does not legislate grounds for divorce but teaches that the "one-flesh" relationship established by marriage is not obliterated by divorce or even by remarriage.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4: When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favour in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house, and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's wife, and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife,⁴ then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been

defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.

8.1 The remarkable thing about these four verses is that, while divorce is taken for granted, nevertheless the woman who is divorced becomes "defiled" by her remarriage (verse 4). It may well be that when the Pharisees asked Jesus if divorce was legitimate he based his negative answer not only on God's intention expressed in Genesis 1:27 and 2:24, but also on the implication of Deuteronomy 24:4 that remarriage after divorce defiles a person. In other words, there were ample clues in the Mosaic law that the divorce concession was on the basis of the hardness of man's heart and really did not make divorce and remarriage legitimate.

8.2 The prohibition of a wife returning to her first husband even after her second husband dies (because it is an abomination) suggests very strongly that today no second marriage should be broken up in order to restore a first one (for Heth and Wenham's explanation of this see *Jesus and Divorce*, page 110).

9. 1 Corinthians 7:15 does not mean that when a Christian is deserted by an unbelieving spouse he or she is free to remarry. It means that the Christian is not bound to fight in order to preserve togetherness. Separation is permissible if the unbelieving partner insists on it.

1 Corinthians 7:15: If the unbelieving partner desires to separate, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. For God has called us to peace.

9.1 There are several reasons why the phrase "is not bound" should not be construed to mean "is free to remarry."

9.11 Marriage is an ordinance of creation binding on all of God's human creatures, irrespective of their faith or lack of faith.

9.12 The word used for "bound" (*douloo*) in verse 15 is not the same word used in verse 39 where Paul says, "A wife is bound (*deo*) to her husband as long as he lives." Paul consistently uses *deo* when speaking of the legal aspect of being bound to one marriage partner (Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:39), or to one's betrothed (1 Corinthians 7:27). But when he refers to a deserted spouse not being bound in 1 Corinthians 7:15, he chooses a different word (*douloo*) which we would expect him to do if he were not giving a deserted spouse the same freedom to remarry that he gives to a spouse whose partner has died (verse 39).

9.13 The last phrase of verse 15 ("God has called us to peace") supports verse 15 best if Paul is saying that a deserted partner is not "bound to make war" on the deserting unbeliever to get him or her to stay. It seems to me that the peace God

has called us to is the peace of marital harmony. Therefore, if the unbelieving partner insists on departing, then the believing partner is not bound to live in perpetual conflict with the unbelieving spouse, but is free and innocent in letting him or her go.

9.14 This interpretation also preserves a closer harmony to the intention of verses 10-11, where an inevitable separation does not result in the right of remarriage.

9.15 Verse 16 ("For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?") is an argument that you can't know, and so should not make the hope of saving them a ground for fighting to make them stay. This supports the understanding of verse 15 as a focus on not being enslaved to stay together, rather than not being enslaved to stay single.

9.16 Paul did not see the single life as a life of slavery and so would not have called the necessity of staying single a state of being enslaved.

10. 1 Corinthians 7:27-28 does not teach the right of divorced persons to remarry. It teaches that betrothed virgins should seriously consider the life of singleness, but do not sin if they marry.

1 Corinthians 7:27-28: Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek marriage.²⁸ But if you marry, you do not sin, and if a virgin marries, she does not sin.

10.1 Recently some people have argued that this passage deals with divorced people because in verse 27 Paul asks, "Are you free (literally: loosed) from a wife?" Some have assumed that he means, "Are you divorced?" Thus he would be saying in verse 28 that it is not sin when divorced people remarry. There are several reasons why this interpretation is most unlikely.

10.11 Verse 25 signals that Paul is beginning a new section and dealing with a new issue. He says, "Now concerning the virgins (ton parthenon) I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy." He has already dealt with the problem of divorced people in verses 10-16. Now he takes up a new issue about those who are not yet married, and he signals this by saying, "Now concerning the virgins." Therefore, it is very unlikely that the people referred to in verses 27 and 28 are divorced.

10.12 A flat statement that it is not sin for divorced people to be remarried (verse 28) would contradict verse 11, where he said that a woman who has separated from her husband should remain single.

10.13 Verse 36 is surely describing the same situation in view in verses 27 and 28, but clearly refers to a couple that is not yet married. "If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his virgin, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin." This is the same as verse 28 where Paul says, "But if you marry, you do not sin."

10.14 The reference in verse 27 to being bound to a "wife" may be misleading because it may suggest that the man is already married. But in Greek the word for wife is simply "woman" and may refer to a man's betrothed as well as his spouse. The context dictates that the reference is to a man's betrothed virgin, not to his spouse. So "being bound" and "being loosed" have reference to whether a person is betrothed or not.

10.15 It is significant that the verb Paul uses for "loosed" (*luo*) or "free" is not a word that he uses for divorce. Paul's words for divorce are *chorizo* (verses 10,11,15; cf. Matthew 19:6) and *aphienai* (verses 11,12,13).

11. The exception clause of Matthew 19:9 need not imply that divorce on account of adultery frees a person to be remarried. All the weight of the New Testament evidence given in the preceding ten points is against this view, and there are several ways to make good sense out of this verse so that it does not conflict with the broad teaching of the New Testament that remarriage after divorce is prohibited.

Matthew 19:9: And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.

11.1 Several years ago I taught our congregation in two evening services concerning my understanding of this verse and argued that "except for immorality" did not refer to adultery but to premarital sexual fornication which a man or a woman discovers in the betrothed partner. Since that time I have discovered other people who hold this view and who have given it a much more scholarly exposition than I did. I have also discovered numerous other ways of understanding this verse which also exclude the legitimacy of remarriage.

11.2 Here I will simply give a brief summary of my own view of Matthew 19:9 and how I came to it.

I began, first of all, by being troubled that the absolute form of Jesus' denunciation of divorce and remarriage in Mark 10:11,12 and Luke 16:18 is not preserved by Matthew, if in fact his exception clause is a loophole for divorce and remarriage. I was bothered by the simple assumption that so many writers make that Matthew is simply making explicit something that would have been

implicitly understood by the hearers of Jesus or the readers of Mark 10 and Luke 16.

Would they really have assumed that the absolute statements included exceptions? I have very strong doubts, and therefore my inclination is to inquire whether or not in fact Matthew's exception clause conforms to the absoluteness of Mark and Luke.

The second thing that began to disturb me was the question, Why does Matthew use the word *porneia* ("except for immorality") instead of the word *moicheia* which means adultery? Almost all commentators seem to make the simple assumption again that *porneia* means adultery in this context. The question nags at me why Matthew would not use the word for adultery, if that is in fact what he meant.

Then I noticed something very interesting. The only other place besides Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 where Matthew uses the word *porneia* is in 15:19 where it is used alongside of *moicheia*. Therefore, the primary contextual evidence for Matthew's usage is that he conceives of *porneia* as something different than adultery. Could this mean, then, that Matthew conceives of *porneia* in its normal sense of fornication or incest (1 Corinthians 5:1) rather than adultery?

A. Isaksson agrees with this view of *porneia* and sums up his research much like this on pages 134-5 of *Marriage and Ministry*:

Thus we cannot get away from the fact that the distinction between what was to be regarded as *porneia* and what was to be regarded as *moicheia* was very strictly maintained in pre-Christian Jewish literature and in the N.T. *Porneia* may, of course, denote different forms of forbidden sexual relations, but we can find no unequivocal examples of the use of this word to denote a wife's adultery. Under these circumstances we can hardly assume that this word means adultery in the clauses in Matthew. The logia on divorce are worded as a paragraph of the law, intended to be obeyed by the members of the Church. Under these circumstances it is inconceivable that in a text of this nature the writer would not have maintained a clear distinction between what was unchastity and what was adultery: *moicheia* and not *porneia* was used to describe the wife's adultery. From the philological point of view there are accordingly very strong arguments against this interpretation of the clauses as permitting divorce in the case in which the wife was guilty of adultery.

The next clue in my search for an explanation came when I stumbled upon the use of *porneia* in John 8:41 where Jewish leaders indirectly accuse Jesus of being born of *porneia*. In other words, since they don't accept the virgin birth, they assume that Mary had committed fornication and Jesus was the result of

this act. On the basis of that clue I went back to study Matthew's record of Jesus' birth in Matthew 1:18-20. This was extremely enlightening.

In these verses Joseph and Mary are referred to as husband (*aner*) and wife (*gunaika*). Yet they are described as only being betrothed to each other. This is probably owing to the fact that the words for husband and wife are simply man and woman and to the fact that betrothal was a much more significant commitment than engagement is today. In verse 19 Joseph resolves "to divorce" Mary. The word for divorce is the same as the word in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. But most important of all, Matthew says that Joseph was "just" in making the decision to divorce Mary, presumably on account of her *porneia*, fornication.

Therefore, as Matthew proceeded to construct the narrative of his gospel, he finds himself in chapter 5 and then later in chapter 19 needing to prohibit all remarriage after divorce (as taught by Jesus) and yet to allow for "divorces" like the one Joseph contemplated toward his betrothed whom he thought guilty of fornication (*porneia*). Therefore, Matthew includes the exception clause in particular to exonerate Joseph, but also in general to show that the kind of "divorce" that one might pursue during a betrothal on account of fornication is not included in Jesus' absolute prohibition.

A common objection to this interpretation is that both in Matthew 19:3-8 and in Matthew 5:31-32 the issue Jesus is responding to is marriage not betrothal. The point is pressed that "except for fornication" is irrelevant to the context of marriage.

My answer is that this irrelevancy is just the point Matthew wants to make. We may take it for granted that the breakup of an engaged couple over fornication is not an evil "divorce" and does not prohibit remarriage. But we cannot assume that Matthew's readers would take this for granted.

Even in Matthew 5:32, where it seems pointless for us to exclude "the case of fornication" (since we can't see how a betrothed virgin could be "made an adulteress" in any case), it may not be pointless for Matthew's readers. For that matter, it may not be pointless for any readers: if Jesus had said, "Every man who divorces his woman makes her an adulteress," a reader could legitimately ask: "Then was Joseph about to make Mary an adulteress?" We may say this question is not reasonable since we think you can't make unmarried women adulteresses. But it certainly is not meaningless or, perhaps for some readers, pointless, for Matthew to make explicit the obvious exclusion of the case of fornication during betrothal.

This interpretation of the exception clause has several advantages:

1. It does not force Matthew to contradict the plain, absolute meaning of Mark and Luke and the whole range of New Testament teaching set forth above in sections 1-10, including Matthew's own absolute teaching in 19:3-8
2. It provides an explanation for why the word *porneia* is used in Matthew's exception clause instead of *moicheia*
3. It squares with Matthew's own use of *porneia* for fornication in Matthew 15:19
4. It fits the demands of Matthew's wider context concerning Joseph's contemplated divorce.

Since I first wrote this exposition of Matthew 19:9 I have discovered a chapter on this view in Heth and Wenham, *Jesus and Divorce* and a scholarly defence of it by A. Isaksson, *Marriage and Ministry in the New Temple* (1965).

Conclusions and Applications

In the New Testament the question about remarriage after divorce is not determined by:

1. The guilt or innocence of either spouse,
2. Nor by whether either spouse is a believer or not,
3. Nor by whether the divorce happened before or after either spouse's conversion,
4. Nor by the ease or difficulty of living as a single parent for the rest of life on earth,
5. Nor by whether there is adultery or desertion involved,
6. Nor by the on-going reality of the hardness of the human heart,
7. Nor by the cultural permissiveness of the surrounding society.

Rather it is determined by the fact that:

1. Marriage is a "one-flesh" relationship of divine establishment and extraordinary significance in the eyes of God (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:8),
2. Only God, not man, can end this one-flesh relationship (Matthew 19:6; Mark 10:9—this is why remarriage is called adultery by Jesus: he assumes that the first marriage is still binding, Matthew 5:32; Luke 16:18; Mark 10:11),
3. God ends the one-flesh relationship of marriage only through the death of one of the spouses (Romans 7:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:39),
4. The grace and power of God are promised and sufficient to enable a trusting, divorced Christian to be single all this earthly life if necessary (Matthew 19:10-12,26; 1 Corinthians 10:13),

5. Temporal frustrations and disadvantages are much to be preferred over the disobedience of remarriage, and will yield deep and lasting joy both in this life and the life to come (Matthew 5:29-30).

Those who are already remarried:

1. Should acknowledge that the choice to remarry and the act of entering a second marriage was sin, and confess it as such and seek forgiveness
2. Should not attempt to return to the first partner after entering a second union (see 8.2 above)
3. Should not separate and live as single people thinking that this would result in less sin because all their sexual relations are acts of adultery. The Bible does not give prescriptions for this particular case, but it does treat second marriages as having significant standing in God's eyes. That is, there were promises made and there has been a union formed. It should not have been formed, but it was. It is not to be taken lightly. Promises are to be kept, and the union is to be sanctified to God. While not the ideal state, staying in a second marriage is God's will for a couple and their ongoing relations should not be looked on as adulterous.



The Apologetics of Baptism (see also page 76)

There are three modes (or methods) of water baptism used in Christian churches today: immersion (in which the person is completely submerged), effusion (that is, pouring), and aspersion (sprinkling). Evangelical Christians are divided on the question of which mode or modes are proper forms of baptism. Some Christians (typically those who believe that only believers should be baptized)

think that immersion is the only valid mode, while other Christians (usually those who recognize the validity of infant baptism) consider all three modes to be acceptable. Some of the main points to consider are the following:

1. The word baptizo in Greek, translated “baptize” in the New Testaments, meant to “dip” or “immerse.” It is sometimes argued that in Mark 7:4 and Luke 11:38 the word means “to wash by pouring,” not “immerse”; but in those texts the actual meaning (as historical information substantiates) is to “wash by dipping or immersing in water.”
1. Baptism is specifically stated in the New Testament to represent the Christian’s spiritual union with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-7), which is remarkably and dramatically pictured in immersion. To this it is usually pointed out that baptism may also serve as a picture of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17, 33, 38; 10:45-48), and also of the sprinkling, either of the blood of Jesus for forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:19-22; 10:22, 12:24; I Peter 1:2), or of the “clean water” representing the impartation of the new nature and the giving of the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:25-27). It is true that in Acts, Peter makes a connection between the pouring of the Spirit and the rite of baptism, but the connection is not as direct as the kind found in Romans 6:3-7; and the Bible never connects baptism with the imagery of sprinkling.
2. Whenever the act of baptism is described in the New Testament (which is rarely), the one who is baptized actually goes into the water. Thus, after Jesus was baptized, He “came up out of the water” (Mark 1:10), and when Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, “they both went down into the water” (Acts 8:38). These descriptions do not quite prove complete immersion, however, since they could have stood, let us say, ankle-deep in water while one of them scooped up some water and poured it over the other’s head. Furthermore, we are not told in Scripture that we must baptize in exactly the same way as John or Philip.
3. The mode used by the early Church in the first few centuries was immersion, with effusion reserved for occasions when immersion was impossible due to lack of sufficient water, and aspersion used for individuals too sick or weak for either immersion or affusion. Thus, immersion was the norm and the other two modes were substitutes in exceptional circumstances. This situation, however, began to change fairly early and by the 13th century was actually reversed, with aspersion the norm. Even after the Reformation, immersion as the norm became accepted only by a segment of Protestantism and only after a period of transition during which effusion was the norm.
4. Those who believe that all three modes are valid would point out that only in the most ritualistic view of baptism can the amount of water be

considered important. The immersion-only view, they say, appears absurd: What if one hair fails to be immersed? What if a finger or a hand? Where does one draw the line? But the opposing argument can be made to appear absurd also: If a small amount of water is permissible, is one drop enough? How about no water at all (not a view to be laughed away, since the “Quakers” take this exact view)? Where does one draw the line at this end? Therefore, the better approach is to realize that it is the general form of the act and the intention of those involved that matter, not the precise amount of water used. The issue is: Shall we obey the command of Christ as He intended or shall we obey the command in a way that pleases us?

What shall we conclude from these observations? It seems clear to us that immersion is the biblical norm, but that it is not an inflexible norm. That is, Scripture and common sense indicate that the water is not all-important and that, therefore, other modes may be used as substitutes in exceptional circumstances. God accepts the believer on the basis of his faith in Christ and his desire to obey Him, not on the basis of how much water covered his body when he was baptized. The doctrine that immersion is the only valid mode of baptism and that only those so baptized should be admitted into the fellowship of the Church body would, therefore, appear to be a bit extreme and not based on Scripture. The Church should welcome into its fellowship all those whom Christ has accepted (Romans 15:7, I John 1:3).



Christian Parenting

"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. You shall teach them diligently to your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." Deuteronomy 6:6-7

"The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the home of the righteous." Proverbs 3:33

The republication of *Legh Richmond's "Domestic Portraiture"* is a favorable opportunity for prefixing a few remarks on *Christian education*, a most important part of every parent's duty, and the root of innumerable future blessings. In doing this, the writer hopes, in some measure, to concentrate within a short compass, the many truly valuable exhortations and pressing entreaties to his children, by his honoured and beloved friend, Mr. Richmond, which this volume contains.

It is common to hear complaints, that the children of pious parents disappoint the expectations which are usually and naturally formed; and it is true that this is too often the case; and that in some instances children piously educated, will, when they break through the restraints of *education* and *habit*, become excessively wicked—and they may, even like Eli's and David's children, perish in their wickedness. In these extreme cases, there has probably been either some *serious neglect of parental duty*, or the formation of unhappy friendships with others. At least, every Christian parent is mute before God under such awful dispensations, and is feelingly alive to the conviction of his own sinfulness.

But, after all, the mass of Christian piety in a country will be found to be in the generation of the pious; and though God shows his own sovereignty in sometimes raising up an eminent instrument of good from among the most wicked, he also shows the riches and the faith fullness of his own promises: "The generation of the upright is blessed." "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

It may be of use, briefly to notice some causes of *lack of success*, and also to touch upon the *means* of a successful Christian education.

In considering the causes of lack of success, we must first notice the disregard of one of the most important religious principles—a due knowledge of which lies at the root of all success in this work—that all children are by nature born in sin, and are children of wrath. They inherit from their parents, a carnal mind, which is enmity against God. However pious the parent, his nature is corrupt, and descends to his children. From us they derive that nature, and all success in education must be owing to God's blessing our efforts, and giving them his grace, that they may gain dominion over their natural and inbred corruption.

The Christian parent will ever be watchful to detect the workings of this corruption, even in those things which may appear to the eye of the world, pleasing and delightful. That alone which is the fruit of the Spirit—that alone which is superior to nature, will satisfy him. While he will forward and cultivate whatever is lovely and of good report, he will be, above all, anxious, that

everything of this kind should proceed from *Christian principle*, and not from the mere love of human praise.

The *indulgence of parents*, proceeding from an *idolatry of their children*, is one of the most common sources of ill-success. This was the ruin of Eli's and of David's children, and it is a cause which is constantly operating in a vast variety of forms; such as indulgence in appetite, in dress, in pleasures, in yielding to any obviously improper requests, and in seeking rather to gratify their present wishes, than to secure their future, their spiritual, and their highest good.

The *inconsistencies of Christian parents* in their conduct and conversation, have a most pernicious influence over their children. The spirit of the *world*, the lust of the *flesh*, the lust of the *eye*, and the *pride* of life, manifested by a parent—are eagerly and most naturally imbibed by children. They are creatures of *imitation* in all things—but they have a natural aptitude in imitating whatever is wrong. The bad tempers, the haughtiness, the self-will of the parents—are very soon indeed, copied by the child. Their admiration of riches, or rank, or talent—naturally engenders similar inordinate views and feelings in their children. Thus, our sins punish us in our offspring.

Improper friendships which children are allowed to form with others, whether of a similar, or of an older age, but especially of the latter—often ruin the best laid plans for education. Children are so soon captivated by delusive and spurious appearances of superior wisdom, and by the vain promises of liberty and pleasure; that one evening spent amidst the *fascinations of worldly society*, may unsettle and permanently injure their young and inexperienced minds.

Amid the common complaints of lack of success in the bringing up of children, complaints which are often heard from Christian parents—it is pleasant to contemplate those instances which sometimes occur, as in the families of Mr. Richmond, where more gratifying results have been realized.

The inquiry is most interesting, and most important—*whence arises this difference?*

A customary resource for consolation, and almost for justification, in cases of an *unhappy* description, is the doctrine of the *sovereignty of God*.

Often, however, this great and solemn doctrine is brought in as an *excuse for parental neglect*, when it would be just as reasonable to assign it as an excuse for exposing your child to a pestilence, or for leaving him, in sickness, without medical aid.

The cases above alluded to, and others quite numerous enough to form a rule, and not an exception, show that when certain *means* are used—the corresponding results may be expected to follow; and that the failure of the parent's hopes—may *generally* be traced to their own deficiency in their conduct.

In speaking however of *means*—a word perhaps inadequate—it is desirable to use that word in its utmost extent—to look upon it not merely as comprehending a certain routine of duties, but as embracing the *whole obligation of the parent to the child*.

The first and main obligation is **Love**. It is to be feared that the real root of the mischief of which we are speaking, little as it may be suspected, lies in a deficiency here.

Parents are lacking in a deep sense of the real *worth* and *danger* of their children's *souls*! They wish and hope that they may be serious and godly; but it is a sort of faint, ineffectual wish; not that ardent desire, that unceasing anxiety which filled Mr. Richmond's mind; not that love which made Paul exclaim, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ is formed in you."

From these feeble hopes and languid wishes, flow cold and formal prayers, offered as a duty—not as the inmost desire of the soul. There is no wrestling for the children, with the "I will not let you go except you bless me!" of Augustine's mother. Nor are these the prayers of faith; nor can they be expected to bring down blessings—since the promise is, "Whatever you shall ask, *believing*, you shall receive." They are often offered up from a mere sense of duty, without any expectation, and almost without any sincere desire, that they should be answered. With such *weak and faint impressions of heavenly concerns*, we may expect to find their children clinging firmly to the world. Just in proportion as the one is undervalued, the other is sure to be overestimated. The interests of the present life are eagerly sought after, the affairs of eternity postponed: hence all manner of temptations creep in.

A Christian parent had once, led by prospects of worldly advancement, placed his son beyond the reach of the public means of grace, and in the midst of manifold temptations. The son was shortly after on a visit to his father; and the parent prayed, in his family worship, that the boy might be preserved, amidst the various perils of his situation. The youth reflected, "*Why does my father put me into the devil's mouth—and then pray to God that the devil may not be allowed to swallow me up?*" Surely to have occasioned such a reflection from a child, must have been very painful to the parent?

The result of this line of conduct, half-*Christian*, and half-*worldly*, is to bring up a race of young people acquainted with the *truths* of religion, but without any effectual feeling of its *power*. They are thus in a worse situation than even the more ignorant—since the sound of the gospel can hardly reach the latter without some awakening of the conscience—whereas on the former everything that can be said falls as a mere repetition of what had been fully known for years, but never deeply or effectually *felt*.

The spirit of Mr. Richmond, then—his fervent love for his children's souls, his never-ceasing concern, his constant watchfulness, his daily and hourly prayers, not of *form* but of *faith*—furnish unitedly a model, to which the attention of Christian parents may be most advantageously directed.

Resting in the *form* of godliness without its life and *power*—is one of the great dangers to which the church is peculiarly exposed in this day of general profession. And parents had need be very watchful that they do not unawares foster the most dangerous self-deception in their children, by giving them credit for genuine regeneration and conversion, where there has been nothing more than *excited natural feelings* without any real spiritual change. When the young possess nothing more than what *naturally amiable dispositions under religious culture* may easily produce, they are soon overset in the rough sea of this world's trials and temptations. Let parents beware of too soon speaking *peace* and *rest* to an awakened mind, or a troubled conscience.

The NATURE of a successful Christian education is next to be noticed. And we would not here dwell on subjects which are generally acknowledged, such as **prompt obedience and the honouring of parents**—but would rather point out things which are too often neglected.

1. The first thing is rightly to know the true **foundation** of our hopes of success. This is nothing less solid than the sure promises of God's Word, many of which are very precious to a Christian parent's heart. To know rightly this foundation, and humbly and simply to build upon it in the acting out of these promises, which through faith, and prayer, and consistent conduct, patiently waiting on God to fulfil them in his own time—constitute an important first step to successful education.

2. We must join with this a clear view of the only governing **cause** of success; the free and rich grace of God our Father. All his children are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man—but of God. Here is the origin, here is the maintaining and continuing strength, here is the final triumph of all our efforts; and to cultivate a habit of constantly looking to, and habitually depending upon God, in daily prayer, in every instruction, and in every plan,

formed for our children—is a main principle for obtaining their spiritual good. The faith and prayers of a parent are specially prevalent with our gracious Redeemer—Mark 9. 23, 24.

3. Another important point is, to let our eye be **single** in seeking primarily their spiritual welfare. An all-directing and controlling principle in education should be, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, for our children. This should influence us, as to the *place* in which we fix them, the *company* to which we introduce them, the *books* we wish them to read, the *situation* we desire for them, and in short, as to everything we do concerning them.

4. The diligent and right use of the **means of grace**, is a most important help for children—such as daily reading the scriptures, prayer, habits of self-examination, regular attendance on public worship. But besides all these means, the most important, perhaps, is that *constant inculcation of divine truth*, to which we are so plainly directed in the scriptures, "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. You shall teach them diligently to your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door-frames of your houses and on your gates." Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Particular instruction of the children by themselves, and a mother's private and individual conversation with them, are also of great import.

5. **Discipline** is a matter of constant necessity. A well-disciplined child is the best gift which a parent can bestow on his country. While children left to themselves, and with no settled habits of patient and steady application, are likely to be sources of much trouble to their fellow-creatures. Discipline will seek constantly to restrain, check and subdue all that is wrong—or leading to wrong—and to animate and encourage all that is right. Every day brings fresh occasion for its exercise, with regard to appetite, pleasures, temper, coveting the things of others, neglecting duties, disorderly practices, and indeed all the varied events of life.

6. **Punishment** must not be withheld—but must be varied according to the degree of fault. It is important also that the scale by which we measure the **degrees of wrong** should be Scriptural. Sins directly against God, and moral faults, such as falsehood, passion, and taking anything that does not belong to them—call for the severest punishment, and should never be passed by without chastisement. While accidents from carelessness, though they may occasion us a serious injury—yet should be visited with a lighter penalty, as not being

intentional faults. On the mode of punishment, the reader will find valuable remarks in this volume.

7. Foster and **encourage**, by wise and Christian approbation, everything that is lovely and excellent. Much may be done in forming the character, by due attention to this—all truth, sincerity, generosity, self-denial, and love to others; all diligence and application in good pursuits—should have the parental smile of favor—as all those things which are opposite to these, should be discouraged by marks of disapprobation.

8. Earnestly watch against **seeking great things** for your children. Oh! the inexpressible folly of aiming to gain for them, high connections, in classes of society above them; and for this end placing them in situations of danger, that they may form associations with their superiors! What havoc has this made among the children of pious parents! "*Do not seek great things*" should be our plain rule. "Should you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not!" Jeremiah 45:5.

May God give us grace to attend to these clear directions of his Word. If we trust him, his providence will call our children to those scenes in which they may safely and honourably serve others, and glorify his name; and we shall be preserved from the anguish of seeing them bring reproach on the gospel of Christ.

9. The last thing that I would notice, is **our own consistency of conduct**, as essential to the full effect of a Christian education. If Christian parents act *inconsistently* with their blessed principles—if they are irritable, selfish, proud, disorderly, passionate, and covetous, what can be expected—but similarly evil tempers in their children! But if they are poor in spirit, meek, mourning for sin, and hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and possess and manifest the other graces of a Christian, it is an immense auxiliary to all their religious instruction. In fact, it is one just *retribution* of our evil ways—that our children soon manifest similar evil ways. While on the other hand, an exhibition of *holy conduct* enforces every pious exhortation, and strengthens every solid principle, which we endeavour to communicate to them.

The Editor adds a little sketch of **principles of education**, by which he has desired and endeavoured that his own conduct should be governed.

Points to be kept in view, in a Christian Education.

I. SPIRITUAL Health.

1. *Pray* for them.
2. Continually instill Christian principles.
3. Act in the spirit of the gospel towards them.
4. Watch over their *friendships* with others.
5. Teach them to govern their *tempers*.
6. See that they diligently attend the *means of grace*.
7. Remember the incessant activity and subtlety of *Satan*.

II. PHYSICAL Health.

1. *Exercise* is to be regularly taken.
2. *Temperance* in diet is to be observed.
3. Things *injurious* to health, are to be avoided.
4. Early in bed—and early to rise.

III. MENTAL Cultivation.

1. Their minds should not to be too much pressed.
2. Their minds should be strengthened by reading *solid books*.
3. Habits of *reflection* should be formed and called forth.
4. See that they *understand* their lessons.
5. Habits of *self-denial* should be formed.
6. *Useful* things should be especially attended to.

IV. MANNERS.

1. *Kindness* is to run through everything they do: their morals, school, play, walks, behaviour to other children and adults.
2. *Kindness* is to have its true foundation in Christian principle.
3. *Kindness* to others, is a victory over our natural selfishness.
4. Endeavour to promote the happiness of all around us.

V. TALENTS and Accomplishments.

1. Talents are of a *secondary* value.
2. Talents should be a means of *relaxation*.
3. Talents should commend *piety* to others.
4. Be sure that talents are *innocent*.
5. Guard against those talents, which will lead them into the *world*.

VI. The SAVIOUR is all in all.

1. In every point—show them Christ. He is the root of spiritual prosperity. He is the Physician of body and soul. He is the Giver of all of our blessings. He is altogether lovely in all his ways. He is full of gifts and full of grace.

2. Let everything turn the mind to Jesus. In every walk, in every lesson, in every event, in every sin, in every mercy—speak of Christ!
3. Let Christ be the sun and the glory of every day.

VII. MEANS.

1. "My grace is sufficient for you."
2. "He will give his Holy Spirit to those who ask."
3. "I am your God, I will strengthen you, yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness."

Spanking of Children in Education and Scientific Research

The issue of corporal punishment of children is of considerable significance to conservative Christians. Parents are commanded by God in the Bible to spank their children when they seriously misbehave. The spanking will teach the children to obey legitimate authority (the fifth commandment), and will help to instill self-discipline. God does not simply give parents the option of spanking, He commands it. For example, Proverbs 13:24 says, "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him." (See also Proverbs 22:15 and 23:13-14.) Thus if spanking were to be outlawed, as so-called "children's rights" groups demand, conservative Christian parents would come into direct conflict with the government over this issue. The implications are very serious.

One of the main lines of argumentation used by anti-spanking activists is that there is scientific evidence that spanking is harmful to children and has long-term negative consequences in their lives. There is a brief look at the debate over this scientific evidence included in the book *Debating Children's Lives: Current Controversies on Children and Adolescents* (Sage Publications, 1994). The anti-spanking case is presented by Murray Straus, a professor at the University of New Hampshire, and a leading proponent of the view that science proves spanking to be harmful.

The evidence that Straus presents is based exclusively on a study of people who were "physically punished" in their teen years. Straus has charts which purport to show that the more frequently teenagers are "physically punished," the more likely they will be involved in spousal abuse as adults, the more likely they will have a problem with alcohol abuse, and the more likely they will consider suicide. The "physical punishment" he refers to includes "spanking, slapping, grabbing or shoving a child 'roughly' (i.e., with more force than is needed to move the child), and hitting with certain traditionally acceptable objects such as a hairbrush, belt, ruler, or paddle" (p. 197).

Spanking is not...

It is important to look at this carefully. Straus is using evidence gleaned from a study of teenagers who were, among other things, slapped and shoved roughly, to make claims that spanking is harmful for children. He includes some "punishments" that probably should not be lumped together with spanking. Conservative Christians certainly don't endorse every form of "physical punishment" used on children, just the loving spanking commanded in the Bible. It seems to me that Straus is making somewhat of a stretch from his evidence to his conclusion. The fact that teenagers who are treated violently by their parents are affected negatively should not be a surprise to anyone. But this is an entirely different issue than the spanking of young children. Nevertheless, his work still passes as "scientific" evidence against spanking.

Straus also presents another argument. He says the corporal punishment of children contains a "hidden curriculum" with two key elements. The first element is "the morality of hitting," i.e., that violence is an acceptable way of solving conflict. And the other element is that "those who love you are those who hit you." Straus claims that this element sets the stage for family violence between adults (pp. 198-199).

Straus concludes, then, that outlawing corporal punishment would lead to considerable benefits for society. He claims there would be less drug and alcohol abuse, less wife beating, less "street crime," less depression and suicide, etc. In sum, society would be "healthier, less violent, and wealthier" (p. 203). A big step towards Utopia, in other words.

The research stinks

The pro-spanking position (or better, the anti-anti-spanking position) is presented by John Rosemond, a family psychologist. Rosemond says he doesn't believe spanking is necessary, but he strongly opposes the arguments used by anti-spanking activists. He states his case against the "scientific" evidence very clearly: "The research stinks. All of it. There is not one study into the effects of spanking on children that's worth the paper it's written on. Every single one of them (I've reviewed them all, I think) is rife with design problems" (p. 213). The term "design problems" refers to the fact that a study is not properly capturing the information it claims to be, making the study's conclusions invalid. For example, studying teenagers who were frequently slapped in the face by their parents, and claiming that the negative effects that result, demonstrate that spanking is harmful. The information that is gathered in the study does not provide a basis for the conclusion.

Rosemond mentions other problems with the supposedly scientific evidence. "In the first place, there is no research that tracks children who were spanked properly as opposed to improperly. To my knowledge, that distinction has never been made by any researcher. That reveals something important about many, if not most, of these so-called researchers. They're not doing research at all. They're trying to promote their own personal agendas. And they cloak this promotion, this shameless propaganda effort, in the guise of 'science'" (p. 213). So much for the "scientific" evidence against spanking.

Aside from the empirical research, Straus also made the argument about the "hidden curriculum" of spanking, i.e., that it promotes violence. Referring to this line of argumentation, Rosemond responds, "Anti-spankers cannot, of course, prove any of this. The rhetoric of the argument is emotionally seductive (which is, after all, the point of rhetoric), but in the final analysis it is nothing more than undiluted psychobabble - a construction of language, not fact" (p. 215).

As should be clear, then, this is not really a debate about scientific evidence. The "scientific" agenda is not being driven by empirical data. Rosemond puts his finger on the real issue: "I've come to the conclusion that this debate is more about politics than it is about psychology. The hidden agenda is the desire on the part of a vocal minority within my profession and related fields to write social policy and thereby impose their vision of a perfect world upon the rest of us" (p. 215).

It's easy for Christians to be intimidated when our opponents claim that their position is founded upon "science." In our day and age, when the word "science" has such an aura that no one wants to challenge it, we can be made to feel defenseless in important public debates. But in some cases, such as the spanking debate, our opponents' appeal to science is not legitimate. We can pop their bubble by taking a close and critical look at their evidence, as Rosemond has done. God has commanded us to spank our children because doing so will help them, not harm them. We can be confident that so-called "scientific" evidence to the contrary will be flawed one way or another.

Thinking like a Christian about Modest Apparel

The Christian's wardrobe is no small matter. The daily statements we make with our clothing—intentional or unintentional, interpreted correctly or incorrectly—are among the boldest statements we make. Our children, siblings, coworkers, classmates, and fellow church members cannot help but see our clothing. Everyone notices if we are sloppy or neat, simple or glamorous, provocative or modest. Clothing can both affect our self-image and shape other peoples'

perceptions of us: that is why we spend gobs of money purchasing nice clothing. Thinking Christianly about clothing involves many issues...

We must first remove two obstacles that sometimes prevent Christians from even considering this subject: the belief that any discussion of clothing is inherently legalistic and the belief that such discussions are simply unnecessary. In many places today, simply to raise the subject of immodest clothing is to set off every legalism alarm in the building. This is regrettable.

We do not understand holiness if we think applying Colossians 3:17 (“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”) to the subject of clothing is somehow wrong. The person who says, “Jesus will not be Lord of my clothing” is little different from the person who says, “Jesus will not be Lord of my money.”

Nor is it legalistic when God’s people endeavor to obey God’s instructions. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones put it well when he said that if the “grace” we have received does not help us to keep God’s laws, then we have not really received grace. To be sure, Christians can handle the subject of immodest clothing in a clumsy, unbiblical, and grace-denying fashion. That is a problem. But surely, ignoring the subject is not the solution: by doing this, we imply there is no such thing as inappropriate clothing.

God’s people cannot afford to ignore this issue. Why not? Because Christians who think unbiblically about this issue do not naturally gravitate toward more modest clothing. As is true with other aspects of living the Christian life, we never “drift forward.” Holiness and spiritual maturity must be pursued (Heb 12:14). That pursuit of godliness should be marked by diligence (2Pe 1:10; 3:14). Our mind’s default settings are not godly: renewing our minds produces spiritual transformation (Rom 12:2).

Sometimes Christians dismiss the issue of modest clothing as trivial. It is not. After all, it was God Who noticed the first clothing ever invented, judged it inadequate, and intervened to replace it with apparel of His own making (Gen 3:7, 21). And no one can deny that much of the clothing available in stores today is scandalously immodest. “If you’re blind or from another planet,” writes Barbara Hughes, “you may conceivably have missed the fact that modesty has disappeared. It is dead and buried! If you don’t think so, go shopping with a teenager.”

A third issue also deserves attention at the outset of this discussion. Some God-fearing Christians dress immodestly, even though they have no wish to offend others, flaunt their sexuality, or turn heads with their skimpy apparel. These believers often sincerely think they are dressing modestly. The problem? They

take their fashion cues from the world. They permit the clothing industry and entertainers to define both what is beautiful and what is appropriate apparel. The result? Stylish attire that runs afoul of biblical principles. Clothing that reflects the world's values can be immodest regardless of the wearers' motives. Innocent motives change nothing: unintentional immodesty and "immodesty out of ignorance" are still unbiblical immodesty. The Christian might truthfully say, "It is not my intention to dress sensually or seductively," and yet still dress inappropriately. Surely biblical principles—not worldly fashion designers, movie stars, and celebrities—should set the standards for proper clothing.

To whom is this booklet addressed? I suppose to every reader who wears clothing. However, it seems that we tend to direct messages like this at younger women. This strikes me as inappropriate. The message in this booklet is aimed primarily at husbands and fathers, who are the God-ordained leaders of families.

When I see a Christian teenager who is immodestly dressed, my first thought is, "Where is the father? Why is the father asleep at the wheel?" When a married Christian woman does not dress modestly, my first thought is, "Why is the husband so unconcerned with the Bible's teaching regarding modest clothing?" A man has a God-given responsibility to protect his wife and children. Immodest clothing invites the wrong kind of people to pay the wrong kind of attention to our family members. In addition, improper apparel is sometimes a way to express sensuality in an inappropriate (and public) manner. Men, we dare not ignore these matters.

Similarly, a man has a responsibility to protect others from the stumbling blocks that his wife and children may create with their immodest attire. This is true in all places and at all times, but it is especially true with regard to corporate church meetings. More than one Christian has asked me, "Why can't we have at least one safe haven from tight clothing, cleavage, bare shoulders, and short shorts? Why can't people be sure to dress modestly when they attend church meetings? I expect to be tempted by scandalous clothing when I go to a college campus, but God's people shouldn't have to face that kind of temptation at worship services. Can't Christians be more considerate of others?" That is a legitimate request. Men have an added responsibility: they should explain to their wives and older children how easily men are tempted to lust by immodest clothing. Our families may think that we never battle with sexual temptations. Tell your family the truth! I have spoken with Christian women who simply did not know that Christian men are tempted to sin by immodest clothing. Once they understood, they gladly dressed more modestly.

Has God given us instructions regarding clothing? The answer to this question is yes...The inspired Apostle writes in 1 Timothy 2:9, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety;

not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.” Perhaps the most obvious truth in this verse is one that is often denied today: God does care about our clothing...In 1 Timothy 2:9, modesty is specifically linked to how Christian women adorn themselves with clothing.

Every discussion of modest and immodest clothing at some point asks what could be called The Line Question: Where exactly is the line between acceptable and unacceptable clothing? How do I know where the line is? I will not cross the line, but could you please define precisely where the line exists? The word [shamefacedness] addresses The Line Question because the modest Christians say, “I don’t want to get near the line! I may not know exactly where the line is between acceptable and unacceptable clothing, but I know approximately where it is . . . and I will stay away from it.”

The word [sobriety]...speaks of exercising restraint over one’s thoughts, preferences, and desires. The discreet Christian does not give free rein to his passions; he knows how to bridle his desires. The Bible is exposing something here that many simply do not want to admit: some use their clothing as non-verbal expressions of their own sensuality. They deliberately turn themselves into an object of lust: they walk into a room with the intention of turning heads. Instead of practicing self-control, they openly flaunt their sensuality with their apparel. Dressing [with sobriety] means we do not express our private sexual desires with our public clothing.

Why should believers practice self-control when it comes to their apparel? Indiscreet clothing surely affects others (by tempting them to sin). But both Christians and non-Christians have noticed how clothing affects the wearer as well. “Dress changes the manners,” wrote the French philosopher Voltaire, who was no friend of Christianity but nonetheless a shrewd observer of the human condition. The English writer Virginia Woolf agreed: “There is much to support the view that it is clothes that wear us and not we them; we may make them take the mold of arm or breast, but they would mold our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking.”

This is one of the intangible aspects of clothing that we have all experienced. Donning a new outfit or dressing sharply imparts a sense of confidence and positive self-esteem. By the same token, racy, provocative, and revealing clothing emboldens us to flaunt our sexuality. Christ’s disciple must exercise self-control over his sexual passions, so he must also exercise self-control over apparel that would “mold his heart, brain, and tongue” in inappropriate directions. A built-in cultural application accompanies this command in 1 Timothy 2:9. Notice the verse’s final words: “not with braided hair and gold or pearls or costly garments.” This instructed Christian women not to imitate the

outrageous dress and hairstyles that were commonplace among the Roman nobility. In Paul's day, some women wove precious gems into their hair to create hairstyles costing the modern equivalent of hundreds and even thousands of dollars. They also wore dazzling clothing that easily cost \$10,000 in today's money. This was the unofficial uniform for Roman court women, a uniform that was distinctive and attention grabbing. At the same time, these Roman courtesans were notoriously immoral when it came to sexual matters. These women did not dress properly, modestly, and discreetly. Everyone knew that their lives were characterized by sexual impurity. God's Word says to Christians, "Do not imitate the appearance of these famous and immoral people. No flashiness, gaudiness, extravagance, and flaunting of wealth. No association with these court women of bad reputation. Do not regard these 'court women' as your fashion role models."

Consider the piercing words of Stephen M. Baugh, who is the professor of Greek and New Testament at Westminster West Theological Seminary. Baugh applies these final words in 1 Timothy 2:9 to modern readers: "Today, it is the equivalent of warning Christians away from imitation of styles set by promiscuous pop singers or actresses." That means that if we want to apply this verse practically, Christian women should not imitate the appearances of salacious "Hollywood court women." The very next verse—1 Timothy 2:10—amplifies the Apostle's instruction. The Christian woman is to adorn herself not with improper clothing, "but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works." The [word professing] is from a Greek word meaning to make a public announcement or to convey a message loudly. Our lives make public announcements. The godly woman's public announcement must consist of good works, not questionable clothing. What is the public function of a Christian's good works? Matthew 5:16 says that believers must live in such a manner that men see our good works and therefore glorify our Father Who is in Heaven. Numerous verses state that the Christian's good deeds are valuable not only for the assistance they bring to men but also for what they demonstrate about God's glory (1Pe 2:12; 3:1-6; Mat 9:6-8). The implication here is that both good works and improper clothing have a God-ward element: one provokes men to praise God while the other encourages men to demean Him. The upshot of 1 Timothy 2:10 is that God's reputation is at stake in our public professions. God's glory is more clearly seen when we abound in good works, but it is obscured and misunderstood when we make public announcements with improper clothing...It is not only your reputation that is at stake when you wear improper clothing: God's reputation is also at stake.



Sexual Conduct of Christians

Christian teaching on sexual purity

The Bible teaches that sexual purity provides a solid foundation for marriage. ‘Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral’ (Hebrews 13:4). Sexual purity is an attitude of mind and desire of the heart that comes from an understanding of God’s holy character and is manifest in our thoughts, speech and the way we behave. Impurity, sexual immorality, fornication and adultery are the enemies of marriage, and God’s plan for marriage cannot flourish if sexual immorality is widespread and accepted as the norm.

The concept of chastity flows from the holiness that is central to the character of God. Young women are to be trained ‘to be self-controlled, chaste’ (Titus 2:5). The word ‘chaste’, which is related to the word holy, means clean, modest, pure, undefiled, without blemish. All immorality, impurity and uncontrolled passion are out of place for Christians. ‘But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity’ (Ephesians 5:3). ‘Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires...’ (Colossians 3:5). ‘It is God’s will that you should be holy; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honourable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this

instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit' (1 Thessalonians 4:3-8).

Christian virtues

Christian sexual conduct is expressed in the four virtues—modesty, chivalry, chastity and fidelity. Sexual purity is the foundation on which these virtues are built. While each virtue applies to an aspect of sexual behaviour, together they form a coherent inner belief system that sets a standard for sexual conduct that gives meaning to marriage and the family.

Modesty is the virtue that recognises the rightful purpose of sex as something private, mysterious, and meant for the relationship between husband and wife. Modesty discourages lust and encourages faithful love. Chivalry is the virtue that teaches men to relate to women with honour and respect. It gives men the inner motivation to practise self-control, honesty and decency in relationships. Chastity is based on the desire for sexual purity, both before and after marriage. It welcomes the discipline of self-control and self-denial. Fidelity is based in faithfulness that rejoices in the lifelong nature of the marriage union, and so provides security for all members of the family. Modesty and chivalry are the roots from which the other virtues grow and bear the fruits of marital faithfulness and family security. Marriage and the family flourish when all four virtues are practised. And most important of all, these are the Christian virtues that guard children from danger and abuse—they provide children with God-given security, protecting them from the ravages that result from sexual immorality. In his great wisdom, God has instituted moral laws around human sexual conduct that preserve marriage, secure the family and protect children. These virtues are based in the holy, righteous character of God, and are reflected in his moral law.

1. Modesty – inner beauty, outward conduct

The apostle Paul emphasises the importance of modesty as a Christian virtue. 'I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes' (1 Timothy 2:9). A modest woman does not make an outward show of her female attributes and does not present herself in a way that is sexually provocative or that attracts undue attention. She is careful to abstain from any unbecoming or shameful conduct.

The apostle Peter explains the importance of modesty as a virtue that enhances the inner beauty of women. A wife's beauty 'should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight' (1 Peter 3:3-4).

Modesty is characterised by a quiet and gentle spirit, which demonstrates a woman's true worth. It is primarily directed towards men, and makes a clear statement of a woman's intention to preserve her sexuality for the one man who will be her husband and the father of her children. Because modesty reveals a woman's inner beauty, it is attractive to the man who loves her and chooses her to be his wife.

The woman who parades her sexuality is foolish for she is attracting men for all the wrong reasons. The immodest woman, who appears to attract many men, finds that the respect she longs for is not there. Even in our sexually liberated society men lose respect for the 'easy' woman, although they don't always say so. Immodesty has its price.

The great value of modesty is that it enhances the feminine attributes of womankind. It produces a woman of resolute character who understands the value and purpose of her sexuality. Her relationships with men are based on truth and genuine affection, not on sexual lust. She is not a sex object, but a woman with dignity and value. She understands that she has been blessed with the potential for reproduction and she does not abuse God's gift of motherhood. She understands the value of chastity and knows why sexual intercourse should be reserved for marriage. By her modest behaviour she earns the respect of men, and they desire her companionship because she is a real woman, not because she is sexually available.

2. Chivalry – treating women with honour and respect

Chivalry is the virtue that flows from the apostle Peter's instruction to husbands to treat their wives with respect 'as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life' (1 Peter 3:7). It is a male virtue that recognises the true nature of womanhood. A woman is the weaker partner for she does not have the same physical strength as a man. And more important, she has been given the gracious gift of motherhood. And wrapped up in this gift is a woman's sexual vulnerability for she is prone to pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood. Recognizing this gracious gift, a real man responds by treating women with respect and honour.

So chivalry is founded on biblical truth and provides the moral framework in which a worthy man relates to women; it teaches a man to become a gentleman, committed to honour and principle. Chivalry reveals itself in a man's courteous behaviour; it is natural for a man to honour and protect all women, not only his mother, sister and wife. Like modesty, chivalry comes from the inner self and is a reflection of God's moral law.

Self-control is an essential component of chivalrous behaviour. Christian young men are to be trained by the grace of God ‘to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age’ (Titus 2:12). According to Proverbs, ‘A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls’ (Proverbs 25:28). The discipline of self-control is to be applied in all areas of life, and especially to sexual behaviour. Worldly passions should not be given free rein, but should be controlled. A chivalrous man understands that for a woman there is no such thing as casual sex, for she bears the awful responsibility of conceiving a new life and all that that involves.

Chivalry is an attitude that puts women first, while sexual permissiveness puts self-gratification first and women last. Chivalry treats women with respect as future wives and mothers, while the contraceptive mentality treats women as sexual objects. Chivalry brings the best out of women, for it encourages them to behave with modesty and chastity. Sexual permissiveness, the antithesis of chivalry and modesty, degrades manhood, devalues womanhood and destroys marriage.

Practical advice from Proverbs

The book of Proverbs teaches young people the great value of true wisdom. ‘Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold... She is a tree of life to those who embrace her; those who lay hold on her will be blessed’ (Proverbs 3:13,14,18). So young person, ‘do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones’ (Proverbs 3:7,8). ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline’ (Proverbs 1:7). Here, in practical terms, are guidelines to help you safeguard a chaste way of life:

1. **Listen to your parents’ advice.** ‘Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching’ (Proverbs 1:8). ‘A wise son heeds his father’s instruction, but a mocker does not listen to rebuke’ (13:1). Your parents are the ones who truly love you and have your best interests at heart. The fourth commandment, ‘Honour your father and mother’ makes it a duty for you to obey your parents. Seek their advice with regard to your conduct. ‘A fool spurns his father’s discipline’ (15:5).
2. **Do not keep bad company.** ‘My son, if sinners entice you, do not give in to them’ (Proverbs 1:10). Remember that bad company corrupts good morals. So do not be misled by the boasting and proud talk of the mockers, those who follow evil ways. ‘Do not go along with them, do not set foot on their paths; for their feet rush into sin’ (Proverbs 1:15-16). They cause

trouble for others and for themselves. Young man, keep from the wayward woman 'for her house leads down to death' (Proverbs 2:18). Young woman, keep away from the man who is full of lust, who seeks to use you to satisfy his sexual cravings.

3. **Avoid bad language and devious talk.** Don't think that it is smart, clever or grown up to use foul language and cursing. 'Keep corrupt talk far from your lips' (Proverbs 4:24). 'The mouth of a fool invites ruin' (10,14). Sex talk invites impure thoughts, and inflames sexual cravings.
4. **Keep your eyes pure.** 'Let your eyes look straight ahead' (Proverbs 4:25). Be careful to avoid indulging in sexual images and dirty literature. Jesus warned: 'If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away' (Matthew 5:29). The lust of the eyes inflames passions and leads to uncontrollable sexual temptations.
5. **Do not make light of sexual temptation.** Keep away from the immoral man or woman. Beware of the smooth talk that entices you into wrongdoing. 'Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes, for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life. Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?' (Proverbs 6:25-27). A man or woman who commits sexual immorality is showing a gross lack of judgement.
6. **Do not dress in a way that is seductive.** Young women must be careful not to dress in a way that is designed to arouse sexual thoughts in men. A beautiful woman who shows no discretion is like a gold ring in a pig's snout (Proverbs 11:22). Proverbs warns men to beware of the seductive woman who dresses like a prostitute with crafty intent (7:10). With persuasive words she leads men astray, but her house is a highway to the grave. Remember that men lose respect for the easy, foolish woman who dresses like a tart.

The wise and the foolish

The wise are those who base their decisions, actions and life choices on the wisdom of God. They know that the biblical view of sexual conduct is right. They base their conduct on the solid rock of God's Word. The wise young woman accepts with joy that her sexuality is a gift from God that is meant for marriage and motherhood. A wise young woman radiates the inner beauty of a modest spirit; she strives for sexual purity and practises chastity. With joy she follows the narrow way that leads to life. A wise young man reveals the inner strength of a chivalrous heart; he practises self-control and sexual purity. He treats women with honour and respect. He is faithful to his wife; he loves and protects his children.

The foolish are those who hear God's Word but do not put it into practice. They make their own 'informed' decision about their sexual behaviour. They are deluded into believing that 'recreational' sex is fun. They are deceived by the promise of 'safer sex'. A foolish young woman has sex with men who say that they love her. She puts her faith in contraception. She hopes that the consequences of illicit sex can be avoided. She builds her house on sand. A foolish young man lacks self-control; he is a sexual predator who treats women as sex objects. When the storms of life come, as they surely will, the house built by the foolish young man and the foolish young woman crumbles. This is an eternal truth—sin has consequences, and sexual sin has serious physical consequences. The Bible issues this stern warning. 'Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. We reap what we sow. Those who sow to please the sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; those who sow to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life' (Galatians 6:7-8).

The Calling of Young Women

We have several times used the occasion of infant christening in our ecumenical congregation to preach on the calling of young women. Probably all of our ministers have done this. Hopefully we give equal and balanced emphasis in our preaching to give instruction regarding the calling of young men.

There is urgent reason in our day to preach on the above-named subject. The evil philosophy of feminism is widespread in the church at large. We need to guard against its insidious influences even in our own midst. The philosophy of family planning and birth control is also widespread. One sees fewer and fewer large families. Even though we live in an age of ease and luxury and great abundance, certainly in comparison to bygone days, children are considered to be a burden. The "perfect family" is supposed to be one with two children, hopefully a boy and a girl. Having more than two children is considered beyond the ability of many women to cope with. People in general look down their noses at large families, wondering whether couples who have them might somehow be ignorant of birth control methods, a thing certainly inexcusable in our modern day.

Furthermore, the role of mother in the home is greatly despised in our society. The career woman is glamorized. She is the liberated woman. She is the one who has insisted on her rights which, according to the spirit of our age, all women must by all means do. She has made a name for herself in the world. On the other hand, the mother who stays home to give birth to and raise a family is an ignoramus. She is counted as a nothing. Her life is boring. She is wasting her time. She has submitted herself to some form of evil bondage that hopefully our world is now finally ridding itself of.

With all these ideas bombarding the Christian woman today she needs to know very clearly what her calling is before the Lord. She needs to be encouraged in our day. The godly woman who stays home to bear children and to sacrifice herself to raise them in the fear and admonition of the Lord needs to be praised. She needs to be told over and over of the great honour of her position and the great significance of her calling in the church. "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised" (Proverbs 31:30).

For all of these reasons we ministers must often in our congregations preach on these subjects. Scripture allows us to do this. There is no shortage of texts in the Bible to base sermons on this subject.

I preached recently on the inspired words of the apostle Paul in 1st Timothy 5:14: "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." One might summarize the teaching of this Word of God with the statement: "A woman's place is in the home." That statement is today considered outrageous. Any public person that would dare to make it is tarred and feathered in our day. A politician who would say such a thing would be forced to resign from office by the rabid feminists of our land. Such a statement is hopelessly out of tune with our modern society. It is not "politically correct." It is considered terribly demeaning to women. It is a slur as serious as the racial epitaphs that are so severely condemned by modern society.

Godly women need to know that the above statement is biblical. Paul does not speak as a male chauvinist when he gives this instruction to Timothy to be taught in the church. Paul knew what he was talking about, even though he himself was never married, because he spoke by inspiration of God. But some would immediately say that Paul was speaking only to the age and culture of his day. In his day women were uneducated and were considered to have few talents. There was no such thing as "career women" in the days of the apostle. But our society has "greatly improved" the role of women, it is claimed. The modern-day woman is better educated and much more highly gifted. She has learned better things to do with her life than stay at home and care for children.

Against all of this we boldly say that Paul speaks the Word of God. Godly women must take heed to it. Paul speaks of the will of God for young women in the church. Paul outlines for godly women a most honourable and significant role. There are few occupations in the church that can compare to the role that God has given to women. R.D.H. Lenski, in his commentary on this passage, makes this significant statement: "To rule the house means as wife and mother in the home, to manage the household affairs. This is the domain and province of the woman, *in which no man can compete with her. Its greatness and its importance should ever be held up as woman's divinely intended sphere, in*

which all her womanly qualities and gifts find full play and happiest gratification." That is an excellent statement. It has biblical foundation. It is thoroughly correct and relevant for our times.

In the above-quoted passage Paul summarizes the role of women in three statements. I will therefore that the younger women: 1) marry, 2) bear children, and 3) guide the house. These three are of course all related, as I want to point out. Before we do that I must make two necessary balancing statements. The first is that it is not the will of God that all young women marry. The Lord does not in His providence give partners to all young women in the church. For some this is a thing very difficult to accept. We are deeply sympathetic to this. The single young women in the church however must never be made to feel that if they do not marry, the purpose of their life is not fulfilled, they have no important place in the church. To give such an impression is grievously to hurt the single godly women in the church. 1st Corinthians 7 (another good passage to preach on in our day) has much to say about the virtues and advantages of living a single Christian life. The single Christian woman can devote herself to the service of the Lord in the church in different ways than a married woman who has the great responsibility of caring for her husband and children. The faithful, godly woman who remains single all her life, and serves the Lord with grace in her heart is pleasing to the Lord and can do great things in the kingdom of her Lord.

The second balancing statement that must be made is that God does not give children to every marriage. This too is in the providence of the Lord. The childless married woman must by the grace of God also accept this. This too may be very difficult for some to accept. This difficulty must be deeply sympathized with. For some this burden involves lifelong pain and anguish. Godly women in such a situation in life must be encouraged that this too is of the Lord. They also must be told over and over again that God has a significant place in His church for the childless woman. These too must serve the Lord joyfully and thankfully and with self-sacrifice. History, including Bible history, records the lives of great heroines of faith who never had children of their own to care for. We are thankful to God even today for the outstanding examples of godly women in our churches to whom God did not give children and who devote themselves entirely to the service of the Lord in His church. It would be easy to make a list of these that many of us know very well. Some are known over the whole denomination because of the place they have in the kingdom of the Lord and because of their faithfulness.

Some would object that in 1st Timothy 5 Paul is speaking of young widows. This is true. Apparently there were a number of young widows in the church, maybe because so many young men had died in wars. Paul does not allow these

young women to be inducted into the special order of widows that apparently existed in the church that Timothy was pastoring. The young widows should be refused. Paul gives the reason for this in the preceding verses. The young widows should instead be told to marry and bear children. The woman who divorces her husband and marries another shall be called an adulteress (see Romans 7). But when God takes a partner out of life the marriage bond is severed by God Himself, and the man or woman who remains on earth is free to marry another.

The younger widows are by Paul even encouraged to marry if they so desire. They are to do that, however, only in the Lord, only if the Lord brings into their lives a godly man. It is better not to marry than to marry an ungodly man or anyone with whom you cannot be one in the faith. A young widow must not let the great sorrow of losing her husband drive her to marry any man that might come along and promise to fill the void in her life. An ungodly man will be a lifelong hindrance to serving the Lord and the source of great grief and sorrow over the years of married life. Though the instruction in Timothy is directed to young widows, it also very obviously applies to all young women in the church.

It is good that the young women marry. It is still necessary in our day to condemn the evil promoted in the Roman Catholic Church. I refer to the evil of encouraging young men and young women to become monks and nuns and requiring all these to make a vow of lifelong celibacy. This is contrary to nature and contrary to the purpose of God. 1st Timothy 5:14 is a strong statement against this practice. Paul in 1st Timothy 4:1-3 says that forbidding to marry is a "doctrine of devils." The Roman Catholic Church is responsible for the floods of evil that have flowed from this doctrine of devils in her midst over the centuries.

Marriage prepares the young woman for a very significant role in the church. The young woman is full of life and energy. She has strong sexual desires. Even these sexual desires are God-given and in themselves good. The young woman must use this God-given energy not in a scandalous life of fornication that is so common in our wicked world but in holiness in the sphere of marriage. She must not practice the abominable "live-in arrangement" with a man that is common in our day, so that if she happens not to like a man she has slept with for a time they can split and each look for someone else and make another try. Such live-in arrangements are a very great evil, and God's wrath is upon them. Those who live in such a manner are living in continual fornication and refusing to take the responsibility and calling of marriage seriously. God will judge them for this, both in this life and in the life to come. God's Word exhorts the young woman to marry, not only for selfish pleasure and gratification, but to serve the Lord in marriage. She is encouraged to "make a career" out of being a godly wife and mother.

Marriage, lifelong, faithful marriage, is the necessary, stable, and protective sphere for the nurture of covenant children. We said above that the three exhortations of Paul in 1st Timothy 5:14 go hand in hand. They are beautifully related. The young woman is exhorted to marry, to bear children, and to guide the house. There are plenty of women today who might go along with the first but who despise the second and third exhortations of this passage of God's Word. There are couples who even before marriage vow that they will not have children. Children, in their opinion, are too much of a burden. Children limit especially the freedom of a woman to go out and get her own career. The feminist movement has militantly spread the philosophy that the only way women can be truly free is to be liberated from the bondage of having to bear children in marriage and from the responsibility of having to care for and raise children.

The big push for liberalized abortion laws is exactly this philosophy. A woman must have the right to terminate any pregnancy that she does not want. She must have the right even to kill her own unborn child if this child is in any way going to stand in the way of the woman's freely pursuing her own proud, selfish goals in life. Young godly women in the church-world must be constantly reminded of what monsters of iniquity the advocates of this philosophy really are. Recently there has been much discussion about so-called partial-birth abortions, a procedure, we understand, that involves surgical removal of the brain of an unborn child in its mother's womb and murdering it in this way. Can anyone imagine something more evil than that!? I cannot.

While others might not go as far as this great evil, they nevertheless do not want to have children. It is considered too much of a bother. It requires too much sacrifice. It involves too great a limitation of the freedom of a couple to pursue selfish ambition. But according to God's Word the bearing of children is one of the great purposes of marriage. When this statement is made it is often countered with a vehement defence by those who do not want to have children in their marriage, that having children is not the only purpose of marriage. This is a half truth. Yes, it is true that having children in marriage is not the only purpose of marriage. In fact, it can even be said that having children is not the first purpose of marriage. The first purpose of marriage is that a man and woman live in love and companionship with each other, each assisting the other in the service of the Lord. If God does not give a couple any children, and they do the above, they have fulfilled the God ordained purpose of their marriage. But this does not deny that having children is still one of the main purposes of marriage. This is obvious, is it not? Of course it is! God made it that way.

Furthermore, God has wondrously joined together the act of marriage and the bringing forth of children. The act of marriage involves the most intimate

expression of love and devotion of a couple to each other. The fruit of this intimate expression of love is children. In the act of marriage a husband and wife give themselves selflessly to each other. God Himself has joined to this the wonderful fruit of the generation of children. This is a beautiful thing. The husband and wife who give themselves to each other in such a manner joyfully look for and pray that their love for one another will bring forth the fruit of children in the image and likeness of both of them. Bringing forth children also involves sacrificial love. To have children one must prepare for tremendous self-sacrifice.

But is this not the great calling of the whole Christian life, to sacrifice yourself, not to seek your own selfish ambition? Do we realize how totally antithetical the philosophy of the world is to the requirements of God in every area of life, also in the area of our calling in marriage? W.G. deVries, in his excellent book: *Marriage in Honour*, makes this statement about the philosophy we are discussing: "A married couple that decides not to have children has murdered its marriage from the beginning. Such a marriage comes to a sterile standstill; it perishes from egotism ." How true this statement is!

For young women the calling to have children is followed by the responsibility to "guide the house." Even if the first and second exhortation are acceptable to some couples, many want nothing to do with the third exhortation to "guide the house." The woman of the world must by all means and at all costs have the freedom to pursue her independent worldly career. Therefore there is so much militancy in our time for "good day-care centres." But can such day-care centers raise our covenant children? The answer to that question ought to be obvious to every true, godly, Reformed, believing woman and her husband.

We return in this article to the three exhortations that Paul, the inspired apostle of the Lord, gives to young women in the church in 1st Timothy 5:14. He exhorts them to: 1) Marry in the Lord. 2) Bear covenant children. 3) Guide the house. We saw in our last article how these three are related.

Young women in the church must realize what a tremendous calling it is to bear covenant children. God has given you this calling in His grand and wonderful covenant purpose. It is His purpose to gather His church from the beginning to the end of the world from the generations of believers.

We conceive and bring forth our children in sin. From birth they are just as wicked and depraved and damn-worthy as we are. Not one of them could possibly by his physical birth have any claim to the kingdom of God. If it were not for the grace of God, we with our children would be condemned forever with the ungodly world. But God, by His sovereign grace, is pleased to save us

and also those He has ordained among our children. He is sovereignly pleased to continue His covenant with them from generation to generation.

In every age new lines of the covenant are begun. By the power of the preaching of the gospel to the nations, God's elect are brought unto salvation and into His church. Sometimes whole families are saved at once, as we find to have been true several times in the book of Acts. The church of God is continued with these new generations and with those who have-for many generations been members of God's covenant. What a wonder it is that many of us can trace God's covenant lines - back for many generations. This is all because of the faithfulness and mercy of God and not because of our own efforts. It is not something inherited on account of our natural relationships to our parents and grandparents on the one side and to our children on the other. God saves each new generation by His amazing grace in Christ Jesus and through repentance and faith in Him.

Among the greatest of God's wonders is that He uses us, and particularly you godly young women, to bring forth the children of the covenant. Stop and think of the astounding wonder of this! What could be more wonderful than that our children will some day be among the company of the redeemed eternally in heaven praising and glorifying God? What earthly achievement or career could possibly compare with this? The God-fearing woman properly desires to serve her Lord in this manner. She says with Mary, the mother of the Lord, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38).

The calling of the young woman in the church, however, does not end when she has given birth to covenant children. She must for the sake of these covenant children, and also for the continuation of God's purpose for her marriage, "guide her house." Covenant children must be nurtured, cared for, protected, trained, and disciplined in the covenant home. God ordained it that way. The godly woman has a very great role in this also. Except for those children whom the Lord is pleased to take out of this life in infancy, God will have His covenant children trained from childhood on in the way of the Lord. For this He is pleased to use God-fearing women. This role for the godly woman requires great responsibility, years of faithful labours, and tremendous self-sacrifice. But this is pleasing unto the Lord and will be greatly rewarded.

No other institution in the world, only the covenant home, can nurture covenant children. Not even the church without the home can really do that. Certainly not an ungodly "day-care institution." How can any thinking, godly woman imagine such a thing? For this reason God has called you young women to "guide your house." Mrs. Hillary Clinton is advocating in her newly publicized book that society in general must nurture children. This is all terribly hypocritical when she is a leading advocate of feminist philosophy that promotes the great evil of

abortion and does everything in its power to "liberate" the woman from the home and to demean the role of the women in the home. We can be absolutely sure that all the urging for a supposed societal role in caring for children is going to fall flat in helping to improve the way America raises its youth, as long as women everywhere are being encouraged to forsake their God-ordained responsibility to "guide their house."

The word that is translated in the KJV as "guide the house" is a compound word. The compound word is a combination of a word that means house and another that is, literally, "despot." The godly young woman is to be a "despot" in her home. That of course does not mean that she is to be a cruel, unloving tyrant in her home. Neither does it mean that the young woman is to usurp the authority of her husband in marriage and in the home. Such an interpretation would contradict other Scriptures. Rather the wife and mother is a "despot" in her home when she takes charge in the covenant home. She must manage her home. She must bear the responsibility that God has given her. She must manage her home well, to be "on top of things," have things under control for the purpose of raising her children in the fear of the Lord. This requires her constant presence in the home. This requires hard and diligent work on her part. This requires great talents and great skill and great wisdom on her part. It requires wholehearted and complete devotion. There are in fact hardly any God-given talents that cannot be employed for this purpose to the fullest extent. There is hardly any earthly occupation that requires more self-sacrifice than the role of being a godly mother. Loving self-sacrifice is one of the most glorious of all Christian virtues.

Children need a lot of love and care and discipline, especially in their early lives. They are very impressionable. They are greatly influenced by what goes on in the home, or, in some instances, what does not go on in the home. They need to be molded and directed in their young lives. The world is full of great evils that have tremendous potential to corrupt our children and to harden the sinful nature that they were born with. The world can easily lead our children totally astray, through books they read and television they watch and all the other many influences of the world that come into their lives almost from birth on. The devil wants our children, especially those born of covenant parents. If he can get them already when they are young, they will follow him all their life. The wicked world wants to make its own impact on our children, to mold them according to its own evil and godless philosophy. The godly woman is called to do all in her power to prevent this from happening.

Chiefly, covenant children need to be nurtured and instructed in the great principles of the Word of God and the fear of His name. They must from childhood be told the blessed truths of the gospel. It takes a lot of time and effort and sacrifice to do this. There is no such thing as quality time versus quantity

time in this matter. It takes a lot of quality time and effort. The godly mother in her God-ordained sphere in the home must diligently and faithfully teach her children the truths of God's Word, as these little children eat from her hands and sit on her knees. Mother must each day give her children a balanced measure of love, care, and compassion, with firm and consistent discipline. A woman who is totally exhausted by a career outside of the home is hardly fit to do this. She does not have the emotional and psychological energy that is needed for this role.

The godly woman in the covenant home must be a daily example before her growing, impressionable children. She must be a role model for them. She must be a model of self-sacrifice and tender and compassionate Christian love. Children, especially covenant children who have the Spirit of God in their hearts, will notice this. They will be greatly influenced by this. They will by the grace of God in their hearts follow this role model. This will be to the credit of their godly mothers, and to the rightful and godly praise of these great women in the church.

Paul concludes his admonition to the godly young woman by telling her that she must be careful that the adversary does not speak reproachfully of her. The positive implication of that statement is of course that the great concern of the God-fearing woman must be that she glorifies God. To do that she must avoid as much as possible a life-style that will bring reproach to the name of God. The world follows the devil. It praises its own. It glamorizes the most wicked women of the world. The heroines of the world are the Marilyn Monroes, the Elizabeth Taylors, the Murphy Browns, and all the other wicked, vain, and adulterous movie stars that are so famous in the media. The wicked world knows very well that God's Word demands a radically different life on the part of those who profess the Christian faith. Therefore when those who profess the Christian faith live just like the rest of the world, the adversary will speak reproachfully.

The adversary loves nothing more than ridiculing God's people. By doing this the devil blasphemes God and those who confess to be His children. The God-fearing woman strives by God's grace as much as possible to avoid this, because she loves God and seeks in all things the glory of His name. Certainly the world, especially today, mocks the godly woman in the role that God has given her. But when this woman faithfully serves God, all that mockery will be put to silence, because God will exalt her.

Paul laments that already in his day many had turned aside unto the devil. Many more today in the sphere of the church who profess to be Christians have "turned aside unto the devil." They have done this because they have forsaken their responsibility in the home in order to go out into the world.

The role of the God-fearing young woman in the home is an honourable role. It is one of greatest significance. It is one that when faithfully carried out will bring the greatest reward from the Lord. Proverbs 31 describes the virtuous woman. She is very obviously the woman who "guides her house" well for the sake of her husband and family. She is no modern-day, glamorous career-woman great in the world of the ungodly. She is a woman who fears God. The inspired writer of Proverbs says: "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised." The godly woman who has been a guide of her house will be praised. She will not in our modern world have the praise of men. But who cares about that anyway? All such worldly praise is vain. The godly woman who has been faithful to serve in her God-ordained sphere in the home shall finally be praised by God. And an added blessing of no small account which God gives as her reward already in this life is that her children shall rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he shall praise her.

There is hardly any earthly occupation that requires more self-sacrifice than the role of being a godly mother.

The godly woman in the covenant home must be a daily example before her growing, impressionable children.



God's Word and Science

The December 18, 1995 issue of *Time* magazine had as its cover story, "Is The Bible fact Or Fiction? Archaeologists in the Holy Land are shedding new light on what did- and didn't occur in the greatest stories ever told." The article describes recent archaeological finds in Israel and surrounding areas, and then

categorizes public and scholarly reaction to these finds in three main groupings: "Jewish and Christian Ultraconservatives," who do not believe any part of the Bible is fiction; "Atheists," who want to debunk the whole Bible; and "the moderate majority," who want to be sure that the Bible is scientifically "grounded in truth."

As Evangelical believers we fall into what *Time* calls the "Ultraconservative" group. We believe that the Bible is infallible not only in spiritual matters, but also in accounts with historical and geographical content. So when archaeologists excavate biblical lands and, based on their findings, reach conclusions that differ with the historical account of Scripture, how should a Evangelical believer respond?

It is correct to say that we accept the Word of God by faith, whatever the claims of archaeology or any other branch of science. However, making that statement without any further explanation sounds as if we are pitting blind faith against scientific reason. I intend to demonstrate in this article that while the science of archaeology may be reasonable, it is not truthful; and a faith that provides truth is much to be preferred over a reason that does not.

Of the other two groups mentioned in the magazine article, we can easily understand the "Atheists." We accept the Bible as true, they reject it. As *Time* points out, even when archaeology supports a biblical narrative, the atheists are likely to reject both Scripture and science. Their position is one of faith, as much as is ours. It is just that the object of their faith is their own vanity.

But what is one to make of the third category, the "moderate majority." Many Evangelicals fall into this category, for they are delighted whenever an archaeological find supports a part of Scripture, or, as *Time* says, "strengthens the Bible's claim to historical accuracy." But if a supportive archaeologist enhances Scripture's claim to accuracy, does a scientific detractor weaken the Bible's claim to truth? And if Christians only accept those archaeological findings that they agree with, can they not be justly accused of being positively childish in their refusal to face up to disagreeable facts?

The whole unfortunate enterprise of trying to verify the claims of Scripture with the findings of archaeology rests on a real misunderstanding of how the science of archaeology and the Christian faith view the concept of truth. To focus on this misunderstanding let us confront the claims of archaeology with the simple question, "How do you know?" The answer to this one little question reveals the principles upon which are based all claims to knowledge and truth by any science, philosophy, or religion.

To begin with, we must know what the science of archaeology is, and the type of claims it makes. Secondly, we must compare and contrast archaeological truth and biblical truth. Finally, against this background, let us review again the conflict that *Time* calls “fact vs. faith.”

Archaeological Truth

Archaeology is “the scientific study of extinct peoples through skeletal remains, fossils, and objects of human workmanship (as implements, artifacts, monuments, or inscriptions) found in the earth” (*Webster’s 3rd International Dictionary of the English Language*, 1981). Archaeologists excavate and sift through the remains of ancient civilizations and then try to piece together their findings into a coherent picture of how the people of that society lived, and how its institutions functioned.

Perhaps the most important artifact that any civilization leaves behind is its body of literature. Many societies in the ancient Middle East left their writings in stone (the hieroglyphs of Egypt), or on soft clay tablets that hardened into stone over time (the Babylonians and Assyrians). The ancient Hebrews apparently used paper, or possibly animal skins. Since these materials decompose, documents written on them had to be recopied time and again. Archaeologists generally accept hieroglyphs and clay tablets as being more accurate than paper manuscripts, since the former are more likely to be the original writings. There is obviously much less room for error or editing in a document carved on stone than on a manuscript copy several times removed from the original. The *Time* article gives several examples of archaeologists rejecting biblical manuscripts in cepti of their own theories based on other artifacts.

The book of Joshua, chapter 6, records the destruction of the walls of Jericho, allowing the Israelites under the leadership of Joshua to conquer the city. *Time* tells us that after extensive excavations at the site of ancient Jericho, archaeologists have determined that the location was abandoned between about 1500-1100 BC. According to them no walled cities existed during this time in this area of Canaan. Conservative biblical scholars and archaeologists disagree on the date of the Israelite entrance into Canaan, but they both agree that it falls well within the time-range mentioned above. Given this chronology, modern archaeology concludes that the Hebrews moved onto vacant or sparsely populated land. This thinking allows no walls to come tumbling down, and no city to be conquered. The ceptics also doubt that Joshua even existed. Without a battle, who needs a general?

Now let us ask the test question: How do they know that Jericho and its walls did not exist during this time period?

Just as our society paves over old streets and erects new buildings over the remains of old foundations, so ancient civilizations built towns and cities over the debris of earlier structures. When archaeologists excavate a site, they divide it into different levels, each level or layer corresponding to a defined era of human habitation or abandonment. The methods by which a date for a particular level is determined are quite involved, and a detailed explanation of them is beyond the scope of this article.

To gain some idea of what is involved, consider a future archaeologist excavating our civilization. He digs down through layer after layer of debris, and among this debris he finds fragments of both ceramic and plastic plates and other kitchenware. But at a certain level the plastic disappears, and below that he finds only shards of ceramic plates and pots. Suppose that at this transition level he also finds some sort of preserved calendar dated "1950." He now has his dating "key": the calendar and the plastic dishes. This key tells him that at this initial site plastic dishes were not in use before 1950. If he encounters plastic dishes at any other site, in the absence of any conflicting finds, he can assume that the level he finds them in was inhabited in 1950 or later.

At Jericho, the scientists found some sort of artifacts (probably pottery) at a certain level that allowed them to date that level at 1500-1100 BC, based upon their "key" with similar artifacts at other excavations. This particular level did not contain the foundations or remains of any city walls, buildings, or other structures that would indicate a city. How to explain this discrepancy with the biblical account? The earliest extant manuscript of the book of Joshua dates from a period hundreds of years after the events described in the book. Skeptics theorize that such a manuscript, in being recopied from a decaying original, could have been altered by a careless or zealous scribe, seeking to glorify his God and the history of his nation by inventing a battle that never occurred and a leader who never existed.

The archaeologists who excavated Jericho published their theory. These findings were debated and ultimately accepted by most of the archaeological community. Unless and until some new evidence comes along, the modern science of archaeology has determined that the Israelite conquest of Canaan as described in the book of Joshua is not factual. Specifically, Joshua did not fight the battle of Jericho. This is an archaeological truth, or, more accurately, a testing by archaeological research methods of a biblical story, and the biblical passage in question fails the test.

Conservative biblical scholars disagree, but their objections are tainted because they are trying to prove the Bible, instead of looking at it objectively, or so the scientists say. Now if religion is the problem, it seems to me that we could easily demonstrate the objectivity of archaeology in the reconstruction of ancient

civilizations by examining a site that has no religious significance for today, but one that has been widely excavated, by numerous scientists. In such a case, there would be no believers to muddy the waters for the clear thinking scientists. There are many such sites; the most famous is Troy.

A number of works of ancient Greek literature are based on an oral tradition, passed down by generations of bards, of a great war between the city-states of Greece and the rich and powerful city of Troy, located in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey). The most famous of these works is *The Illiad*, a poem composed in approximately 800 BC, some 400 years after the events, by a blind Greek named Homer. This epic work does not give an account of the entire war, but it does give a great deal of information about the Greek expedition, the layout of Troy, and the leaders and warriors on both sides of the conflict. In other words, *The Illiad* lists many specifics that sceptics and realists should be able to check.

Perhaps the reader recalls the general outline of the Trojan War: Helen, queen of Sparta, was carried off to Troy by Paris, a prince of the Trojan royal family. Outraged, a number of Greek cities combined forces, sailed to Troy, and besieged the city for ten long years. They were not able to breach the massive walls of Troy, so finally they resorted to subterfuge. By means of a giant hollow wooden idol, the famed Trojan horse, the Greeks infiltrated Troy. The gates were thrown open, and the city was lost. Those Trojans not killed were enslaved, and Troy itself was burned and demolished. The victorious Greeks sailed home with the beautiful Helen, the cause of it all, “the face that launched a thousand ships.”

Since Roman times, scholars have debated the veracity of *The Illiad* and other works on the Trojan War. Do they describe a real war, or a myth? If there was such a war, how accurate is Homer’s telling of it? In the 1850s, modern archaeology took up the debate. For the last 140 years, team after team of scientists has excavated a now deserted site on the coast of Turkey. Their very impressive and voluminous findings were reviewed in a recent documentary series on public television, *In Search of the Trojan War*. It is now believed that the site suspected to contain the ruins of Troy was continuously occupied by humans for over 5000 years. It contains 50 separate levels. Nine of these levels show the characteristics of true cities, i.e., walls, palaces, etc. Nine of the levels also show signs of violent destruction, either by warfare or natural disaster, such as earthquakes.

What of Homer’s Troy? Which level, if any, matches the magnificent city of *The Illiad*? Did the Trojan War really happen? Almost a century and a half of modern scientific investigation, without any religious interference or bias, has yielded a new answer for each new investigator. The archaeological truth about Troy changes with each generation of archaeologists. The original excavator

“proved” that *The Iliad* was as accurate as Christians believe the Bible to be. A later archaeological team threw out most of his conclusions and “proved” that Homer exaggerated greatly, if he told the truth at all. A subsequent generation of diggers “proved” that an earthquake largely destroyed Troy, and that pirates finished the job. And so on.... The only points that all the experts agree on are that the site was inhabited for thousands of years, and it is now abandoned.

But what of the sophisticated techniques for dating artifacts and levels of occupation? Each individual artifact was precisely catalogued by the team that found it. Each highly trained archaeologist looked at those catalogued findings, maybe did some excavations of his own, and then came up with a different interpretation to explain how all those relics got there.

The narrator of the documentary series takes us through these diverse theories in six hours of analysis. At the end, he makes this startling observation on the archaeological search for the truth about the Trojan war: “*There can never be a final word, only a new interpretation by each generation in terms of its own dreams and needs*” (emphasis added). This is the proof, the knowledge, and the truth that modern archaeology gives us: “... *never a final word, only a new interpretation....*”

Returning to archaeological excavations in the lands of the Bible, let us review the case of Joshua and the battle of Jericho. The current secular view is that no battle took place there, and no walls existed. The proof is in the pottery, so to speak. But the final word is not in, and it never will come in. This is not the conclusion of a religious fanatic defending Scripture, this is the method of the science of archaeology, as demonstrated in the search for Troy, and it has nothing to do with Christianity or any other religion.

The sceptic may think that I am merely playing with word meanings in reaching this conclusion. Perhaps he would say that the present theory of “no walls at Jericho” is *substantially* true, and that later excavations in the area will “fine tune” it. The sceptic would be wrong. In archaeology any theory, no matter how well established, can be turned on its head by the next shovel full of dirt at the next excavation. The *Time* article provides us with just such an example.

Many secular archaeologists questioned the existence of King David, because there are no extant manuscripts by or about him dating from the time of his rule (traditional dates 1025-985 BC). As with Joshua and the conquest of Canaan, these scientists speculate that the legend of David may have been added by a scribe recopying documents at a much later date, trying to “improve” the history of Israel. But in modern Israel in 1993 an inscription in stone dating from about 900 BC was found containing the phrases “House of David,” and “King of

Israel.” That one inscription was enough to turn sceptics’ opinion around; now it is generally accepted that David really existed.

A monument and inscription from 1200 BC commemorating Joshua’s victory at the mighty walls of Jericho would similarly turn the archaeological world’s theory of the Hebrew conquest of Canaan on its head. Does such a monument exist? I have no idea. But I am certain that the archaeological truth about Joshua and Jericho will not be the same fifty years from now as it is today, just as today’s theories differ from the conclusions of fifty years ago.

The reader may wonder at my phrasing in saying that the truth of a past event is going to change every fifty years. How does the truth of the past change? Obviously, it never does.

We have an account in writing of Joshua and the Israelites conquering the walled city of Jericho. Now that event either took place or it did not take place. The same can be said for any recorded event. The Greeks sailed to Troy to get Helen, or they did not. David reigned in Jerusalem, or he did not. The theorizing of modern day archaeologists does not change one jot or tittle of history, because it has already occurred; it is out of our grasp, we can never re-live or recall those events. Even if an archaeologist constructed a theory that was absolutely accurate in explaining the Trojan War, or Joshua and the battle of Jericho, no one would ever know it was absolutely accurate, because we cannot go back in time and test the theory against the reality.

This may all seem very basic, but it demonstrates that archaeological research fails to give us historical truth not just occasionally, but consistently. No theory of history based upon archaeological research has ever been true. New theories will continue to pour out of the excavation pits, but none of them will ever be true either. Naturally this conclusion includes written records also. We do not know if those indestructible clay tablets of the Assyrians or Hittites are true or not, and we never will. The same can be said for the Egyptian Hieroglyphs and even for our friend Homer. He tells a wonderful story, but we will never *know* if Achilles and Hector really fought outside the walls of golden Troy.

Biblical Truth

Scientifically, we do not now know if the Bible is true, and we never will. But by faith every believer knows that it is completely true.

Scripture teaches that from eternity past God predetermined everything, everyone, every action, and every moment. By His Spirit and His Word He executed His eternal plan and brought the universe and time itself into existence. Since He precedes creation, including time, He stands outside of it and is

therefore unchanging. When He inspired the prophets and apostles to write down that portion of His eternal plan which He chose to reveal to us He directed them to write His *unchanging* Word describing His *unchanging* plan. When it comes to the past, how could anyone possibly imagine a more authoritative history than the Word of the One who determined that history and then brought it to pass?

Revisiting Joshua and Jericho one last time, let us pose the same question to the biblical narrative that we did to the archaeological theory. How do you know that the scriptural account of the battle of Jericho is true? Because the Bible says so. No theory here, just truth, from the God of truth, who not only observed the events at Jericho, but predestined them before creation itself. To doubt the veracity of any historical event in Scripture is to doubt the very nature of God Himself.

The “moderate majority” will discount this argument as an evasion, circular reasoning, and double talk. It is simply unscientific to believe that the Bible speaks truthfully on historical matters because it says it does. It must be checked, or “verified.” But what can Scripture be checked with? Archeological methods of research can provide us with mountains of information about the type of pottery and spears used in ancient Israel, and we should respect that information and the scientists who work so diligently to extract and study the artifacts they find. But any theory they come up with concerning any part of biblical history is by definition false, and one cannot verify any narrative with a false theory. The “moderate majority” can’t test biblical history with scientific methodology, and I do not see that they have any other candidates to verify it with, so they must either receive it in faith or reject it for no good reason.

The reader may wonder why I have confined my discussion of archaeology and the Bible to the Old Testament, and why I have not considered the subject of miracles. Aside from time and space constraints, there are two main reasons that I have limited the evaluation: 1) The New Testament manuscripts are now generally accepted, even among sceptics. (A few generations ago they were not accepted as genuine, but someone came up with a new theory and now they are). The sceptics do not believe what the manuscripts say, but they do accept them as dating from the apostolic age. 2) Archaeological methods of research cannot give us even one true theory of any period of history that does not speak of miracles. Given that failure, how can archaeologists even begin to comment with any credibility upon a part of Bible history that does contain miracles?

“Fact vs. Faith”

The notion of “fact vs. faith,” as *Time* puts it, now can be seen in all of its silliness and absurdity. To test any scriptural historical account by means of any

theory of archaeology is to test that which cannot be false by means of that which cannot be true. It is the height of nonsense.

The Bible is the means by which God reveals His plan of redemption to His people. As such, it is primarily concerned with spiritual matters, and when we read it we should also be primarily concerned with the spiritual knowledge it contains. But the great drama of redemption is being played out upon the stage of the physical universe and history. We cannot fully appreciate the scope and grandeur of God's plan of salvation if we neglect the platform upon which it is presented. We must not take lightly the denial of the accuracy of biblical history by modern archaeology. If we do not proclaim the truth about Joshua and Jericho or King David or any other historical narrative in Scripture we are guilty of not proclaiming "the whole counsel of God." We are in a battle for truth, and we must look to the heroes of the faith for patience and courage to see our way through it.

When the youthful David visited his brothers on the battlefield, he heard Goliath taunting Israel. He was indignant, declaring "... for who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (I Sam. 17:26). He immediately volunteered to face Goliath in combat, and slew that blasphemer. David had to battle the enemies of Israel physically. Our war with the enemies of the church is spiritual and intellectual in nature, but it is just as real, and just as deadly.

As Christians, let our posture be one of righteous indignation against this giant of sceptical archaeology that slurs the history of the church of Almighty God. Who are these archaeologists who think they can disprove Scripture with a piece of broken pottery dug out of the mud? What is the "moderate majority" that dares tell us what parts of the Bible are "reasonable" to believe in? The battle is joined. Let Reformed believers step forward and speak the truth, in love.

An Evangelical Response

The Faith of Science

Richard Dawkins begins his speech by comparing the threat of AIDS and "mad-cow" disease to the threat posed by faith. He writes that faith is "one of the world's great evils, comparable to the smallpox virus but harder to eradicate" (p 26). Dawkins defines faith as "belief that isn't based on evidence" and calls it the "principle [*sic*] vice of any religion" (*ibid*). Reformed Christians realize that this definition of faith is a caricature. Instead of viewing faith as belief that is not based upon evidence, we view faith as that which is a pre-condition for gaining any other knowledge; faith itself is not irrational or unscientific, but that which must be in order to gain other knowledge through science and logic. For

instance, confidence in the law of non-contradiction could be said to be faith. There is no direct way to prove the law of contradiction except that it must be presupposed in order to learn anything or differentiate anything from anything else. Likewise, the principle of induction, which states that the future will be generally like the past, is what makes possible the formulation of scientific laws and theories. We cannot test the truth of this principle scientifically, for we would be assuming the truth of induction to try and prove it. We cannot test the truth of the principle logically, for logic has as its subject matter static propositions. Thus, induction and the law of contradiction, two of the bedrocks upon which all the rest of Richard Dawkins' knowledge is based, are both things he must accept on faith. Dawkins does not believe this, however, and directs this entire speech at demolishing the notion that science is a religion, or at least a faith-based discipline.

Richard Dawkins and the Apostle Thomas

Dawkins writes, "Well, science is not religion and it doesn't just come down to faith. Although it has many of religion's virtues, it has none of its vices. Science is based upon verifiable evidences" (27). What we have seen above, however, is that science is based upon evidences which are themselves held to be true because of principles which are accepted on faith, induction and the laws of logic. No understanding of the philosophy of science seems to be evidenced by Dawkins' statements. He, in fact, appears to have the same honorific view of science as the technology-stunned *hoi polloi*. Dawkins compares science, which he sees as being based upon "verifiable evidence" with religion which he says shouts "independence from evidence" from the rooftops (*ibid.*). This is why, he says, we Christians criticize Thomas, the disciple who doubted Jesus' resurrection. He writes, "The other apostles are held up to us as exemplars of virtue because faith was enough for them. Doubting Thomas, on the other hand, required evidence. Perhaps he should be the patron saint of scientists" (27). Let us examine the Thomas story, so as not to let any of Dawkins' erroneous statements pass by without comment.

First of all, Dawkins says that the disciples only believed based upon faith. This is not at all accurate. In John 20:19 and following we find Jesus, after his resurrection, appearing miraculously in a locked room among the disciples. He "came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord" (Jn 20:19,20). Jesus not only appears to them, but he also shows them his wounded side and wounded hands to prove to them that he is the crucified, but resurrected Jesus. Where is the faith here?

Well, Thomas wasn't with the other disciples, so they reported to him what they had seen. Ten of his best friends all reported to him the same thing, that Jesus

was resurrected. He did not believe them, however. Is this because he refused to believe on faith? No. There was the evidence of ten eyewitnesses, and yet he refused to believe, even given all the miraculous things he had already witnessed. How many journal articles must Dawkins read before he agrees with the findings of the scientific community? Has he seen all the calculations which allow us to postulate the existence of sub-atomic particles? Doesn't the testimony of witnesses count as evidence for Dawkins? I would imagine so, or else he would be forced to personally verify every experiment upon which he bases his current research.

Thomas' answer is more revealing of his attitude than his evidential requirements. He says to his 10 closest friends, whose word he doubts, "Unless I see the nail marks in the hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it" (Jn 20:25). Notice how strident Thomas' evidential ultimatum is. One thing that should be clear is that one's expectation for verification must match the entity under question. What if I stated, "I will not believe in the existence of Saltine Crackers until I eat one and it makes a sweet taste in my mouth"? This would be absurd. I would be requiring verification that is not and could not be accessible to me -- verification inappropriate to the entity under question. Suppose Jesus had come back with a non-scarred side and non-scarred hands. Suppose he appeared to the ten and then decided to re-enter heaven. Thomas' requirement for verification would be unreasonable. As it turns out, Thomas may not have even fulfilled his stated evidential standards before he believed. When confronted with Jesus personally, Thomas can do nothing but declare "My Lord and my God!" (v 28). Jesus' response is perhaps where Dawkins and the rest of the atheistic or so-called "Freethought" community have received their impetus to use Thomas as the poster-child for Enlightenment rationalism and Baconian empiricism. He says to Thomas, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (29). In context, this quote is easily understood to be speaking of a different kind of belief required in the post-apostolic era. In the Gospels are recorded many miraculous acts of Jesus. Many who witnessed these events with their very eyes did not even believe! Some did, however. Now that Jesus is returning to heaven, there will be no chance to believe based upon sight. One must believe based upon the testimony of the apostles. Thomas' brand of faith is inappropriate for the apostolic era and beyond. Analogously, I must believe in the assassination of Abraham Lincoln based upon the testimony of witnesses. I cannot demand to see the event personally in order to believe it. Such a requirement is inappropriate for this time in history. Thomas, likewise, is held up to be an example of one whose brand of faith was too crude for the coming era. The question is not faith versus evidence, but what kind of evidence! If believing the testimony of witnesses is a kind of faith that scientists are not to embrace, then why are there scientific

journals? (*Dawkins here may well respond that scientists often include their data in journal articles, and thus their experiments can be checked. But who is to say that the scientists are honest in the reporting of their findings?*)

Richard Dawkins (3) and Morality

On page 27, Dawkins calls faith a "vice". He criticizes scientists who falsify evidence. He calls science "one of the most moral, one of the most honest disciplines around - because science would completely collapse if it weren't for a scrupulous adherence to honesty in the reporting of evidence". He criticizes the law profession for being based upon the falsifying, or at least the twisting, of evidence. On page 28 he calls religious instruction "mental child abuse" stating that it is wrong to inculcate children in a particular religion. On page 29, Dawkins draws a finer point on the issue of morality writing, "When the religious education class turns to ethics, I don't think science actually has a lot to say, and I would replace it with rational moral philosophy." Further, "It's a rewarding question, whatever your personal morality, to ask as an evolutionist where morals come from; by what route has the human brain gained its tendency to have ethics and morals, a feeling of right and wrong?" He hints that a "thinking and feeling chimpanzee" should have more rights than "a human fetus with the faculties of a worm". He writes, responding to the charge of scientific zealotry, "Sometimes there may be a little bit of justice in this accusation; but as zealous bigots, we scientists are mere amateurs at the game. We're content to argue with those who disagree with us. We don't kill them". Here, apparently, Dawkins means to say that arguing is morally better than killing. As the above testifies, it is truly amazing how much time Dawkins devotes to ethical issues. Let us ask, however, what kind of pronouncements Dawkins is able to make about ethical issues given his view of the world.

3 Clinton **Richard Dawkins**, FRS, FRSL, born March 26, 1941 (age 73), is a biologist, evolutionist, agnostic (See: Richard Dawkins and agnosticism) and leftist/liberal. Most of Richard Dawkins' popular books have promoted evolutionary pseudoscience. Dawkins is also the former holder of the Charles Simonyi Chair of the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University. He is an ardent opponent of religion, which he dismisses as mere superstition. However, Dawkins has offered no effective rebuttal to studies which show that the irreligious are more likely to be superstitious than evangelical Christians. Moreover, in terms of the theism vs. agnosticism/atheism issue, Dawkins has shown himself to be rather ignorant in matters of theology and philosophy. For example, atheist philosopher Dr. Michael Ruse declared concerning Dawkins' book *The God Delusion*: "*The God Delusion* makes me embarrassed to be an atheist."

For Dawkins, human beings are animals that have evolved from lower forms of life and ultimately from non-life. They have material brains which have formed alongside material arms, legs, and colons. Somehow, a sense of feeling that some things are right and wrong have welled up in the human mind over the course of evolution. Ethical feelings are epiphenomena, feelings that have developed out of the chemical construction of the brain which itself evolved to possess this capacity. What does this mean? This means that ethical norms are like opposable thumbs, an inherited trait that has evolved gradually from non-life. Ultimately, in Dawkins' particular scientific world-view, there is nothing but matter. Thus, ethical obligations are mere feelings like indigestion or fear. How then, does Dawkins make pronouncements about how children ought to be taught? How does he know that it is better to let them decide about religion for themselves? Suppose someone else felt the epiphenomenon of obligation to teach his children his own religion. How does Dawkins propose going about arbitrating between the two feelings, his and the religious educator? He offers one alternative - rational moral philosophy, a discipline which has not exactly been responsible for very much agreement in the past! How does he decide which is more rational, killing someone for fun or killing someone in self-defence? It seems that since the former produces the state of mind "fun" and the latter is simply a response to the negative state of mind "fear", the former is a more positive, and thus presumably a more rational, thing to seek out. Of course, he is no more able to define rationality in terms of his Darwinistic world-view than he is able to define the ethical. For both are mere epiphenomena like fear, pain or pre-menstrual syndrome. Dawkins would do well to avoid altogether this subject for which his own world-view provides no answers, only a morass. In Dawkins' world-view, people are just animals battling it out in history -- it is no more ethical to let our children decide for themselves about religious issues than it is to grind them up and use them to fertilize the family garden.

Christianity, however, provides a coherent basis for ethics. There is an absolute person, God, and thus his unchanging character, and the ethical aspects of his character, can serve as absolute ethical norms. An added element is that with the character of an absolute God as our guide for ethical obligations we are not left in the dark because God is a person who can reveal his character to us. Not only are there obligations, then, but we can know them. The amazing amount of consolation Dawkins receives from his self-satisfaction with atheistic ethics is further evidence of his self-deception with regard to the possibility of ethics within his world-view. At least Christianity provides the ethical tools needed to critique the behaviour of its own. Christians can condemn the actions of the Spanish Inquisition. Scientists like Dawkins, however, cannot even give a coherent reason for why the biological experiments of the Nazis were unethical.

Richard Dawkins and Awe

Dawkins writes,

"All the great religions have a place for awe, for ecstatic transport at the wonder and beauty of creation. And it's exactly this feeling of spine-shivering, breath-catching awe - almost worship - this flooding of the chest with ecstatic wonder, that modern science can provide ... The merest glance through a microscope at the brain of an ant or through a telescope at a long-ago galaxy of a billion worlds is enough to render poky and parochial the very psalms of praise" (27).

Later, however, he writes, "we know from the second law of thermodynamics that all complexity, all life, all laughter, all sorrow, is hell-bent on leveling itself out into cold nothingness in the end. They - and we - can never be more than temporary, local buckings of the great universal slide into the abyss of uniformity" (29). So is science a good source of encouragement and awe, or for despair and nihilism? Dawkins' universe is one in which humans are animals presently evolving and battling it out until the time when the "sun will engulf the earth" (29). I'm not so sure that Dawkins has made his case that science replaces religion's sense of wonder and awe. Assume for a moment that an absolute person designed and created the ant's brain with all of its minute detail; assume for a moment that a loving God made the crab nebula and the planets and stars in all their vast array! Which is more awe-inspiring, the creation or the creator? I'm not giving an argument for God's existence, here, only that given his existence as creator, he is more awesome than the creation.

Evolution is Religion, not Science

Evolutionists often insist that evolution is a proved fact of science, providing the very framework of scientific interpretation, especially in the biological sciences. This, of course, is nothing but wishful thinking. Evolution is not even a scientific hypothesis, since there is no conceivable way in which it can be tested.

THE RELIGIOUS ESSENCE OF EVOLUTIONISM

As a matter of fact, many leading evolutionists have recognized the essentially "religious" character of evolutionism. Even though they themselves believe evolution to be true, they acknowledge the fact that they believe it! "Science", however, is not supposed to be something one "believes". Science is knowledge—that which can be demonstrated and observed and repeated. Evolution cannot be proved, or even tested; it can only be believed.

For example, two leading evolutionary biologists have described modern neo-Darwinism as "part of an evolutionary dogma accepted by most of us as part of

our training". A prominent British biologist, a Fellow of the Royal Society, in the Introduction to the 1971 edition of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, said that "belief in the theory of evolution" was "exactly parallel to belief in special creation," with evolution merely "a satisfactory faith on which to base our interpretation of nature". G.H. Harper calls it a "metaphysical belief".

Ernst Mayr, the outstanding Harvard evolutionary biologist, calls evolution "man's world view today". Sir Julian Huxley, probably the outstanding evolutionist of the twentieth century saw "evolution as a universal and all-pervading process" and, in fact, nothing less than "the whole of reality." A leading evolutionary geneticist of the present day, writing an obituary for Theodosius Dobzhansky, who himself was probably the nation's leading evolutionist at the time of his death in 1975, says that Dobzhansky's view of evolution followed that of the notorious Jesuit priest, de Chardin.

The place of biological evolution in human thought was, according to Dobzhansky, best expressed in a passage that he often quoted from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin: '(Evolution) is a general postulate to which all theories, all hypotheses, all systems must henceforward bow and which they must satisfy in order to be thinkable and true. Evolution is a light which illuminates all facts, a trajectory which all lines of thought must follow.'

The British physicist, H.S. Lipson, has reached the following conclusion.

In fact, evolution became in a sense a scientific religion; almost all scientists have accepted it and many are prepared to 'bend' their observations to fit in with it.

The man whom Dobzhansky called "France's leading zoologist," although himself an evolutionist, said that scientists should "destroy the myth of evolution" as a simple phenomenon which is "unfolding before us". Dr. Colin Patterson, Senior Paleontologist at the British Museum of Natural History, by any accounting one of the world's top evolutionists today, has recently called evolution "positively anti-knowledge", saying that "all my life I had been duped into taking evolutionism as revealed truth". In another address he called evolution "story-telling". All of the above-cited authorities are (or were) among the world's foremost authorities on evolutionism. Note again the terms which they use in describing evolution.

Evolutionary dogma	A scientific religion
A satisfactory faith	The myth of evolution

Man's world view	Anti-knowledge
All-pervading process	Revealed truth
The whole of reality	An illuminating light
Metaphysical belief	Story-telling

Charles Darwin himself called evolution "this grand view of life". Now such grandiloquent terms as these are not scientific terms! One does not call the law of gravity, for example, "a satisfactory faith", nor speak of the laws of thermodynamics as "dogma". Evolution is, indeed, a grand world view, but it is not science. Its very comprehensiveness makes it impossible even to test scientifically. As Ehrlich and Birch have said: "Every conceivable observation can be fitted into it.—No one can think of ways in which to test it".

RELIGIONS BASED ON EVOLUTION

In view of the fundamentally religious nature of evolution, it is not surprising to find that most world religions are themselves based on evolution. It is certainly unfitting for educators to object to teaching scientific creationism in public schools on the ground that it supports Biblical Christianity when the existing pervasive teaching of evolution is supporting a host of other religions and philosophies.

The concept of evolution did not originate with Charles Darwin. It has been the essential ingredient of all pagan religions and philosophies from time immemorial (e.g., atomism, pantheism, stoicism, gnosticism and all other humanistic and polytheistic systems). All beliefs which assume the ultimacy of the space/time/matter universe, presupposing that the universe has existed from eternity, are fundamentally evolutionary systems. The cosmos, with its innate laws and forces, is the only ultimate reality. Depending on the sophistication of the system, the forces of the universe may be personified as gods and goddesses who organized the eternal chaotic cosmos into its present form (as in ancient Babylonian and Egyptian religions), or else may themselves be invested with organizing capabilities (as in modern scientific evolutionism). In all such cases, these are merely different varieties of the fundamental evolutionist world view, the essential feature of which is the denial that there is one true God and Creator of all things.

In this perspective, it becomes obvious that most of the great world religions—Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Animism, etc. are based on evolution. Creationism is the basis of only such systems as Orthodox Judaism,

Islam and Biblical Christianity. The liberal varieties of Judaism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism, as well as most modern pseudo-Christian cults, are all based on evolution.

All of this points up the absurdity of banning creationist teaching from the schools on the basis that it is religious. The schools are already saturated with the teaching of religion in the guise of evolutionary "science". In the modern school of course, this teaching mostly takes the form of secular humanism, which its own proponents claim to be a "non-theistic religion". It should also be recalled that such philosophies as communism, fascism, socialism, Nazism, and anarchism have been claimed by their founders and promoters to be based on what they regarded as scientific evolutionism. If creation is excluded from the schools because it is compatible with Christian "fundamentalism", should not evolution also be banned since it is the basis of Communism and Nazism?

THE SCIENTIFIC IRRELEVANCE OF EVOLUTION

Some people have deplored the questioning of evolution on the ground that this is attacking science itself. In a recent debate, the evolutionist whom the writer debated did not attempt to give any scientific evidences for evolution, electing instead to spend his time defending such scientific concepts as atomic theory, relativity, gravity, quantum theory and science in general, stating that attacking evolution was tantamount to attacking science!

The fact is, however, that the elimination of evolutionary interpretations from science would hardly be noticed at all, in terms of real scientific understanding and accomplishment. G.H. Harper comments on this subject as follows:

It is frequently claimed that Darwinism is central to modern biology. On the contrary, if all references to Darwinism suddenly disappeared, biology would remain substantially unchanged. It would merely have lost a little colour. Grandiose doctrines in science are like some occupants of high office; they sound very important but have in fact been promoted to a position of ineffectuality.

The scientific irrelevance of evolutionism has been strikingly (but, no doubt, inadvertently) illustrated in a recent issue of *Science News*. This widely read and highly regarded weekly scientific journal was commemorating its sixtieth anniversary, and this included a listing of what it called the "scientific highlights" of the past sixty years.

Of the sixty important scientific discoveries and accomplishments which were chosen, only six could be regarded as related in any way to evolutionist thought. These six were as follows:

- (1). 1927. Discovery that radiation increases mutation rates in fruit flies.
- (2). 1943. Demonstration that nucleic acids carry genetic information.
- (3). 1948. Enunciation of the "big bang" cosmology.
- (4). 1953. Discovery of the "double helix" structure of DNA.
- (5). 1961. First step taken in cracking the genetic code.
- (6). 1973. Development of procedures for producing recombinant DNA molecules.

Four of these six "highlights" are related to the structure and function of DNA. Even though evolutionists have supposed that these concepts somehow correlate with evolution, the fact is that the remarkable DNA molecule provides strong evidence of original creation (since it is far too complex to have arisen by chance) and of conservation of that creation (since the genetic code acts to guarantee reproduction of the same kind, not evolution of new kinds). One of the two other highlights showed how to increase mutations but, since all known true mutations are harmful, this contributed nothing whatever to the understanding of evolution. One (the "big bang" concept) was indeed an evolutionary idea but it is still an idea which has never been proved and today is increasingly being recognized as incompatible with basic physical laws.

Consequently, it is fair to conclude that no truly significant accomplishment of modern science either depends on evolution or supports evolution! There would certainly be no detriment to real scientific learning if creation were incorporated as an alternative to evolution in school curricula. It would on the other hand, prove a detriment to the pervasive religion of atheistic humanism which now controls our schools.

Home Church Administration

Hymn (Psalms) Singing

There has been always people advocating the exclusive singing of Psalms within Christian circles, especially within Reformed circles. Exclusive Psalmody was promoted mainly by the English Puritans and became a part of that Tradition. However, is the exclusive singing of Psalms really biblical, or is it just something which was an overreaction to the many errors within Roman Catholicism. It is my contention that exclusive Psalmody is not biblical, and I will show this to be the case.

THE CASE FOR EXCLUSIVE PSALMODY

1) The Regulative Principle of Worship

Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it (Deut. 12:32)

The Regulative Principle of Worship can be seen explicitly in this verse and in various passages in the Bible, with the narrative of Lev. 10:1-3 showing the death of Abihu and Nadab, the 2 sons of Aaron who died because they offered strange or unauthorized fire in worship before God, as the best illustration of the practice of the Regulative Principle of Worship. Israel was to worship God according to His stated ways; no more and no less. We are therefore not to worship God contrary to the ways He has prescribed to us in the Scriptures. According to the Exclusive Psalmodyists therefore:

"God has commanded His people to sing the Psalms of the Bible when they gather together for worship. He has not commanded them to sing songs of their own composition. The consistent application of the Regulative Principle of Worship, then, excludes the use of songs which God has not commanded to be used in worship."

2) Sufficiency of Scripture

"The Psalms of the Bible are God's Word. They lack nothing that is needed by the people of God in their expression of praise and adoration to Him when they gather for worship."

The necessary implication of the use of man-written hymns in the worship of God is that the Psalms alone are somehow not a sufficient volume of praise for God's people. We reject this notion and we believe that the 150 Psalms of the

Bible are a perfectly sufficient hymnbook for the church of God throughout the ages."

3) The Continuity of the Covenant

"The Psalms of the Bible were written for the very purpose of proclaiming the New Covenant promises which were fulfilled in Christ. In fact, Jesus Himself claimed that the Psalms were about Him (see Luke 24:44). Would it not seem strange if the people of God were commanded to sing the Psalms only until the time of Christ's appearing, and then to put them aside once they were able to fully appreciate their true meaning?"

"We do not believe that the Old Testament is outdated. ... By anchoring the church's praise in the prophecies of the Old Testament through the book of Psalms, God's people are continually reminded of their heritage among the chosen people of God throughout all ages" (Comin)

4) The Purpose of Worship

"We believe that worship is to be God-centred. ... When God's people approach His worship in this way, they will inevitably be blessed. When they approach Him according to their own ideas of what is acceptable to Him, they may experience some emotional uplifting, but God has not been honoured through the keeping of His Word."

5) They are without error/ Praise songs must be inspired

"We should be concerned that what we offer to God in praise is perfect and without blemish. "When we sing to God the songs which He Himself has written, we can be assured that what we are offering to God in praise is not tainted with error"

"A careful examination of the Scripture passages which discuss the songs used in worship and how worship songs were composed reveals that God only authorizes and accepts divinely inspired songs for the praise of Himself." ^[1]

6) They promote memorization

"Another great benefit to singing the Psalms is the memorization of the Scriptures."

7) They carry the power of the Spirit

"We have no promise from God that the words of men, no matter how well-intentioned, will pierce the heart and administer grace to His people. But we have such a promise with regard to God's own Word" (Heb. 4:12)

8) They perfectly balance themes

"There are some themes in the Bible in which we tend to take special delight. There are others which seem more difficult to swallow, but which are just as necessary for our growth in grace and in the knowledge of the whole counsel of God ... [The book of Psalms] is, therefore, a book of praise which keeps us anchored in the whole counsel of God, feeding our souls with both the "sweet" and the "sour" meat of God's Word"

9) They provide a basis for unity

"There are certain hymns ... containing doctrinal statements with which Christians from another denominational background might disagree. But there is no such difficulty with the Psalms. They are the very Word of God.

Imagine what strides would be made towards unifying the church if all of God's people made His songs the theme of their praise whenever they came together for corporate worship"

10) Singing is a separate element of worship, not a circumstance of worship

This was written to counter critics of Exclusive Psalmody, of which Brian Schwertley targets Greg Bahnsen who is quoted as saying that singing is a circumstance of worship, or in other words that although praising God is commanded, the mode is a mere circumstance not strictly regulated by God's Word.

BIBLICAL AND LOGICAL REFUTATION OF EXCLUSIVE PSALMODY

As we have seen the arguments propped up for the promotion of exclusive Psalmody, let us look and logically apply the text of Scripture to evaluate their arguments.

1) The regulative principle of worship

As an Evangelical, Reformed Christian, I most definitely hold to the Regulative Principle of worship. Certainly, it is very clear in Scripture that we are to worship God in the way He has prescribed for us, and that is why I am against

any form of mood enhancement used within charismatic circles (ie usage of different lightings in worship, changing of background pictures in worship song PowerPoint slides, endless repetition of choruses etc.), and also against any form of drama and dancing in the corporate worship of God's people. That said, I disagree that the Regulative Principle reduces the songs to be sung to only the Psalms.

More will be said about the relation of Psalms with Hymns and Spiritual songs later, but for now it will be said that the premise that God has not commanded His people to sing Psalms only is false. The much debated phrase in Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 of 'psalms, hymns and spiritual songs' does seem to state that God's people are to sing songs other than psalms. Of course, the exclusive Psalmists will interpret the phrase to actually mean 'psalm, psalm and psalm', which is just ridiculous. Yes, the Bible does use such triadic forms of expression, but such forms do not mean the same thing! They are variations of the point being driven at, but nevertheless they are different. For example, in Ex. 34:7, the term 'Iniquity', 'transgression' and 'sin' are not the same. Definitely, all iniquity and transgression is sin, but iniquity (injustice) is not exactly the same as transgression (to violate a law), nor is sin consisting of iniquity and transgression and nothing more than that (it also includes for example Original Sin). Similarly, commandments, statutes and rules (Deut. 6:1) while having the same meaning do not have the same focus or connotations. Commandments focuses on the fact that God is making the keeping of them obligatory. Statutes focuses on the fact of the established nature of it, while rules focuses on the people who are to obey them. In another example, works (miracles), wonders and signs (Acts 2:22) are not exactly the same, as all miracles are wonders and signs, but not all signs are miracles (Nebuchadnezzar's dream depicting the rise of the Persian, Greek and Roman empires as interpreted by Daniel the prophet in Dan. 2:31-45 for example, or the fulfilment of most of the prophecies about Jesus which are pretty mundane - involving the sovereign working of God through Providence but not exactly miraculous). Thus, we can see from all this that triadic expressions do not at all prove that the phrase 'psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs' mean 'psalms, psalms and psalms', even if that phrase is a triadic expression in the first place, which is strongly disputed.

2) Sufficiency of Scripture

This charge would only hold true if the songs that we sing are not derived from Scripture. Just because the exclusive Psalmists do not like them does not mean that they are not derived from Scripture.

3) The Continuity of the Covenant

This supports the singing of the Psalms, but it has no weight in arguing for **Exclusive** Psalmody.

4) The Purpose of Worship

This argument presupposes that exclusive Psalmody is God's way. In other words, such an argument commits the logical fallacy of *Petitio Principii* or begging the question. Basically, what this is reduced to is that exclusive Psalmody is correct because it is God-centred, and the reason why it is God-centred is because exclusive Psalmody is correct.

5) They are without error/ Praise songs must be inspired

For the first argument, the fact of the matter is that there is no such thing as singing something without interpretation. All other biblical hymns and songs which could be sung are derived from Scripture, and as such have the additional interpretative grid of the songwriter and the person who sings it to God. Psalms are inspired and are thus without any error (assuming they are not a paraphrase of the Psalms), but there is still the need for the worshipper singing it to interpret the words of Scripture and direct it towards God in a heart of worship to Him. Since that is the case, it is entirely possible that error may creep in to the singing of Psalms through the improper attitude of the worshipper or the misinterpretation of the words of Scripture sung, especially if the words are difficult to understand or the true meaning rendered obsolete due to it being archaic (ie. singing the Psalms in the KJV). I have personally took part in Psalm singing word for word from the KJV metrical Psalter before, and it might as well have been in another language due my inability to understand the archaic words fast enough to offer them up as a sacrifice to God. So much for perfection!

The second argument is another *Petitio Principii*. God only accepted inspired songs as stated in the Bible **because** any song which was said to be acceptable unto God in the Bible must be written down and therefore they became inspired. If God has accepted any other worship song which is not stated in the Scriptures, how will we know that there is such a song? This is such a ridiculous argument on the part of the Exclusive Psalmodyists!

6) They promote memorization

In other words, without singing Psalms, people will not memorize them? So if hymns and praise songs were organized around a particular verse or passage of Scripture, Exclusive Psalmodyists would not be promoting memorization of that

particular text or passage of Scripture since they prohibit people from singing them? This argument of theirs cuts both ways and is as such useless.

7) They carry the power of the Spirit

This is just another variation of the argument from the sufficiency of Scripture, and would be given the same response. Since the hymns and songs which we use are and will be derived from Scripture, they similarly carry the power of the Spirit with them. Furthermore, whatever happened to preaching if only the singing of Psalms would ensure that people's hearts would be touched by the Word?

8) They perfectly balance themes

And so do hymns and songs which give heed to the **full** counsel of God. Furthermore, if Christians have matured in their walk with Christ, there is NO thing which they would find repugnant about God. They would accept and glorify God even in the manner of the imprecatory Psalms, so this argument is invalid.

9) They provide a basis for unity

Of all the arguments stated, this is the most ridiculous. The 'worship wars' have been one of the factors which are responsible for splitting churches. Rightly or wrongly, the fact of the matter is that instead of promoting unity, they promote **disunity**, especially when the Exclusive Psalmists attempt to impose Psalms-only worship, creating a third group in the 'worship wars'. And the battle for bible versions could very well spill over into the singing of Psalms even if everybody consents to singing only Psalms. In such a hypothetical situation, would there be the 'KJV-Psalms-only group' verses the 'NIV-Psalms-only' group, or even the 'metrical Psalms' group verses the 'non-metrical Psalms' group? It is laughable and extremely naive that agreeing to singing the Psalms only would immediately resolve all conflict in matters of worship.

10) Singing is a separate element of worship, not a circumstance of worship

The concept of separating worship into various "elements", each of which is to be governed by the regulative principle, is unbiblical. So instead of saying singing being a circumstance of worship, like Greg Bahnsen, it is instead maintained that the classic separation into "elements" is unbiblical in the first place. But even if it is conceded that such a separation is stated in Scripture, and even if singing is indeed a separate element of worship, the Exclusive Psalmist point is also not proved. What it proves instead is that the lyrics of

worship songs must be taken from Scripture *en toto*, not that only Psalms are allowed.

It has been seen that the Exclusive Psalmodyists love to posit sharp demarcations between the category of psalms, that of hymns and that of spiritual songs "as defined in modern times ". However, where did such a categorization come from? Definitely, all are songs of praise expressing devotion and worship unto God. If we would use the so called triadic phrasing on Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16, then these terms would be variations of the same main commonality, or songs offered as worship to God. Generally, Psalms are differentiated from Hymns by the fact that one is explicitly inspired and placed within a book of its own (Psalms), and the fact that they as such employ Hebrew poetic forms. What we class as 'spiritual songs' today (ie CCM - Contemporary Christian Music) are distinguished from hymns due to the fact that they abandon the musical metrical form of hymns (ie 8.7.8.7) and they are generally not so rich in doctrine, more focused on the expression of worship through more detailed reflection on a few truths of Scripture rather than on the singing of various truths as in hymns. As such, they are more of a difference in literary and musical styles which differentiate them. Therefore, since all are derived from Scripture, I would suggest that unless the Exclusive Psalmodyists would like to go into literary and musical styles, such sharp demarcation of theirs do not hold water. After all, the only reason why Psalms are known as Psalms and nothing else is is more because they are found in the book of Psalms rather than anything else.

With that said, let us go on the offensive.

The most devastating critique against exclusive Psalmody is the absence of the name Jesus, our most precious Savior, Redeemer and Lord. Yes, Jesus is prophesied throughout even the book of Psalms, but still His name is not mentioned. Substituting the name Jesus into the Psalms could well do the trick, but then it is no more exactly a Psalm rather than something akin to a paraphrase already, which is no different from what biblical hymn and song writers have been doing in putting biblical truths and verses into song.

Even worse for the Exclusive Psalmodyists is that there is no biblical command for anyone to practice exclusive Psalmody. As I have shown previously, the Regulative Principle of worship does not prove exclusive Psalmody. Neither does it prove exclusive anything, neither psalms nor hymns nor CCM. All songs which are glorifying to God in their content and their musical style are permitted for God's people to be utilized for worship. The main thing that is most important is that the people must be able to understand the words and express their praise, thanksgiving and worship to our God, which using a KJV word-for-word metrical Psalter certainly didn't help in my case. As a side note, I really think that the Reformed and Anglican churches should modernize their Psalms

and Hymns, for example in replacing the ‘thees’ and ‘thous’. For those who are not born in such an environment, it is a perpetual irritant which make people like me disconnected from the worship of a church (among other factors of course).

Other problems, some of them serious, can be seen in this push for Exclusive Psalmody. As stated by W. Gary Crampton,

Third, for their argument to be valid, the exclusive Psalmodists must distinguish between teaching, preaching, singing, and reciting Biblical truth. In Ephesians 5:19 we are told to “speak” (laleo) to one another, and in Colossians 3: 16 to “teach” (didasko) one another, “by means of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.” Yet, Paul also instructed Timothy to “teach” (didasko) (1 Timothy 4:11; 6:2) and to “preach” (kerusso) (2 Timothy 4:2) to his congregation in public worship. **Now is it rational to suppose that it is Biblically proper to preach the truths found in the Apostles’ Creed and not be able to sing or recite the same truths because they are nowhere found in the Psalms? This is far from likely; indeed, it is nonsensical.** The church has every Biblical warrant to formulate Scripturally based uninspired hymns, songs, creedal statements, and so forth, and incorporate them into the public worship of God as a means of praising him and teaching one another.

Fourth, another question that must be posed to the exclusive Psalmodists is this: “What constitutes a metrical Psalm?” How faithful must the Psalms sung be to the Scriptures? Some of the metrical psalms are at best rough paraphrases of the Hebrew text. Exclusive Psalmodists would not tolerate such looseness in their Bibles. Singing these psalms is far from singing “inspired Scripture.” **Does the exclusive Psalmodist violate the regulative principle when he does not sing the Psalms in the exact language of the Hebrew?**^[2]

The argument for Exclusive Psalmody, or Exclusive anything, therefore collapses. Perhaps the Exclusive Psalmodists will wish to learn Hebrew and then sing the Psalms according to the wordings of the Masoretic Text?

Lastly, as for the Westminster Confession of Faith (Chapter XI, Paragraph V), it is stated that the religious worship of God ought to consists of the singing of psalms. Yet, here psalms most probably do not refer to the Psalms (capital ‘P’)^[2] but is a generic term referring to songs offered as worship unto God.

As such, it can be seen that there is no biblical and exegetical grounds for Exclusive Psalmody. May we in the Reformed churches stop adding to Scripture and impose such an unbiblical tradition on ourselves and others. Just because the Puritans and Presbyterians were right about many things does not make them infallible. We are to be always reforming (*orman reformanda*) according to the light of Scripture, not just copy wholesale the entirety of the doctrines and

practices of spiritual giants, no matter how godly they were; they are not the standard – *Norma formans non normata* – Scripture is.

Women Ministers or Pastors

1 Timothy 2:12

"But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

Although Balancedword Women's Online Ministry is a Ministry for Women, we adhere to the Holy Scriptures, The Word of God. Before I go any further I am well aware that many will refute this commentary and my mail box will be filled with comments such as, "you set women back fifty years", or "how dare you forsake your own?" Let me assure you that this is not a new concept to me. I have taken a great amount of heat over other studies on this site and I am assured that this will be no different.



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This subject has burdened my heart greatly and when researching the subject I have found that most of the commentaries written on Women teaching Men come from men themselves. Therefore my Beloved Friend, I ask that you give another Sister in Christ the opportunity to share with you this subject from a Woman's perspective.

I think the first item of business that needs to be covered is that God loves and calls women to His service just as He does men. We are no less meaningful to God as men are. Remember He is NO respecter of persons, Romans 2:11:

For there is no respect of persons with God. However our roles are very different and clear in the scripture:

1 Timothy 5:14: "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, and give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."

Proverbs 31: 11 The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. 12 She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

Titus 2:3 The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

Now some may take these scriptures and say, "Those are menial jobs that God calls women to do." First who says they are menial? Raising children, Caring for a home and making sure it run's smoothly. Is by know means MENIAL. Setting a Godly example and training young women as well is not menial. It is hard work and labour but how awesome a labour of love for us to serve our Lord this way.

With that said let us pray that we can come to a full understanding of God's will for us, and for understanding our role as Women of God:

Father God, we come before you with our hearts humbled and our eyes and ears open to your Word. Lord I ask that you would make clear to all of us your will and desire for each of us. Father, Bless this time each lady

spends here and use this opportunity for each of us to glean from the message you have laid upon my heart on this subject. In your precious name we pray, Amen

Now to answer the question. Is it Biblical for Women to serve behind the pulpit? Let's look at Scripture and make this decision based on the Word of God.

BIBLICAL FACTS:

First Timothy 2: 11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

Let women learn: Here we see the principles that Women are called to learn, learn Christ, learn scripture, We must not think that we can use our sex as an excuse from learning what is necessary for salvation and Godly living.

Second Timothy 2: 12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

The Greek word for teach is *didasko* {did-as'-ko} {Strong's 1321} which means 1) to teach 1a) to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, deliver didactic discourses 1b) to be a teacher 1c) to discharge the office of a teacher, conduct one's self as a teacher 2) to teach one 2a) to impart instruction 2b) instill doctrine into one 2c) the thing taught or enjoined 2d) to explain or expound a thing 2f) to teach one something. So we see here that a woman is not to instruct, instill doctrine into, explain or expound, or teach a man.

Timothy 2: 13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

Paul is simply stating God's chain of command. The order of creation: man was created first, and given original authority. Paul sees Adam's authority as derived from God, and Eve's authority as derived from Adam. Eve (representing women) was deceived. But because of Eve's deception, Paul reasons that women have a greater tendency to spiritual deception. This is in fact very true. Women seem to be more spiritually sensitive than men; for good or evil.

Many believers will challenge Paul's instruction on Women in leadership and teaching men, quoting that this was in the old day. Making claim that we need not adhere to those "old ways".

However the Apostle Paul anticipated a rejection of this teaching therefore went a step further and wrote:

First Corinthians 14:34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. 35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. 36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? 37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

We see here that Paul is not speaking his own words but the words of God himself. Now to say that this applies to the days of old would be saying that God changes, and we know clearly from the scripture that this is not true.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. 1 Corinthians 12 :6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

WHAT ABOUT DEBORAH?

It would seem that many of women preachers and their male advocates hold to their position knowing full-well that it is contrary to scripture. Often, when confronted, they will simply say that they know what the Bible says but that the passages in question are not for our dispensation. Or, the woman preacher herself, will appeal to her own experience claiming that it was God who has called them (as though God would do anything contrary to His Word?), often they are just indignant. But occasionally, you come across someone who will attempt to make a biblical case for women preachers. When they do, it seems that without fail they appeal to the judgeship of Deborah Judges 4.

There are many that do not know how to counter this argument! Once, when confronted with this subject. The conclusion is so simple. The first thing discovered was that Deborah lived at the time when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" Judges 17:6 In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes. Judges 21:25 In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

We read that God raised up Othniel as a Judge. Judges 3:9 And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel, who delivered them, even Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

God raised up Gideon: Judges 6:12-And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. 13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. 14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

God raised up Samson Judges 13:24 And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. 25 And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.

But with Deborah, we learn as much from what the Bible does not say as in what it does say. Regarding Deborah we read: "she judged Israel at that time" Judges 4:4 And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. Again at a time when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" Deborah, without being raised up by God, judged Israel. Deborah was not a God called judge.

Her great accomplishment was to conquer Sisera. Yet we read in Hebrews 11 that it was Barak's faith that wrought this victory. Hebrews 11: 32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions. In Judges 4:8 we read that Barak was a coward who would only go if Deborah went with him. Judges 4:8 and Barak said unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go: but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go. Deborah appears to be the one with the faith. But God gives Barak the credit in His "hall of fame." Hebrews 11: 32 And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: 33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions.

We will not even begin to consider the theological implications here, rather, the point is that Deborah was by all indication not a great leader or a great woman but a usurper who did that which was right in her own eyes. The other argument given in support of women preachers is that Deborah was called a "prophetess" Judges 4:4 And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time. However, a simple visit to the back of Strong's Concordance will eradicate this argument. The Hebrew word translated "prophetess" in our KJV is the word "nebiyah" which means "a prophets wife." Strongs Number 05031. So

Deborah was neither a God called preacher, a God called judge, or a woman of greater than ordinary faith (remember that Barak is the one, not Deborah, accounted by God to have been the vessel of faith in Hebrews 11). Further, her being called a "prophetess" meant nothing more than that she was married to a prophet.

To all the women preachers of the world I ask, Will you be like Deborah? Will you do that which is right in your own eyes? Yes, Deborah was probably "saved" and yes she did do some Good. She probably judged right on many occasions and God may have even blessed people for following some of her judgements. But she was not God's ideal. Do you want to do a little good or do you want to be God's ideal?

INFERIOR?

This does not mean that women are inferior to men; or that they have no place in the work of Yahweh. The Holy Scriptures provide several examples of women God used:

Queen Esther, saved her people by being obedient to God's will.

Ruth, who once again through obedience left her land of idols and famine to become a woman of God thus she was used in the bloodline of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Priscilla, a woman who stood by her husband and choose to serve Christ in a time that it could have cost her, her own life. Yet, she persevered and helped the early church through her hospitality and commitment to the Great Commission. Eunice, mother of Timothy who being obedient to her true calling of motherhood raised her son to know the Lord, in which God used to direct, guide and be a help to the Apostle Paul in the building and teaching the church.

Rahab, who's faith was so obvious and simple that thru her, her family was saved.

The Samaritan Woman at the well, whom went about telling her people of the saving Grace that Christ so freely gave her, thus others being saved from eternal damnation.

Dorcas, This woman was famous for being a New Testament woman of great honour.

None of these Women took authority over men-- their good deeds followed their obedience to God and His role for them. Any Christian woman who is not

satisfied with this pattern, who feels she must stand behind a pulpit to be fulfilled really needs to take a step back and refocus on His true calling of her.

There lies NO possible room to say that God allowed for a Woman to be leader in the church be it Pastor, Deacon, Elder or Bishop. Note the qualities a deacon must have : 1 Timothy 3: 8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. 11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. 12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. UT OH! How can we even question this scripture? It is quiet clear that a deacon MUST be a man, have one wife, and rule his house well. This leaves no room at all for a woman to be called Deacon, 1. It's clear that the Deacon can have only 1 wife. Last I checked, with the exception of Vermont women couldn't have wives.

No one will doubt but that only men officiated as priests in the Temple services ordained of Almighty God. Had Yeshua the Messiah intended the New Testament church to function differently he would have made that fact known by appointing at least a few women apostles. But he didn't. He chose twelve men who, later, when selecting seven deacons also chose men instead of women for those duties. These facts have a message for the church today. Heed it.

How could a woman possibly be a pastor when she is forbidden to teach or to have any authority over men? Women can only be pastors if they openly disobey the Bible's teaching. One may ask why or how this situation has become so controversial and so misconstrued?

CHURCH STANDARDS

The sad truth of the situation is rather than the church affecting society. Society affects the church. Rather than the church standing on Biblical Content some have bowed down to the "equality in sex" rebellion that rocks our country today. There is a war among the sexes for total equality, this ranges from fire fighters, construction workers, and sadly enough even behind our pulpits. As women demand equality in all roles of society, why would one think that the church would be any different than any other establishment? The answer is clear the church too often looks for other sources outside of the Bible for guidance and even acceptance.

Once again I reiterate that Men and women were made for different roles, neither role being better than the other, but designed to compliment each other. If indeed we take the scripture literally as it was intended to be then we see that

the New Testament affirms that men are to be the leaders in the home and church. Women were not created to rule these divine institutions; men were. The prophet Isaiah was condemning Israel when he said women ruled over them Isa. 3:12 As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. In the church, according to the Bible, no woman is qualified to be a pastor or a deacon or in any other leadership position over men. Who says? God says!

"Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection. But I do not suffer a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression" (1 Tim. 2:11-14).

"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak: but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also says the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:34-37).

In Ezekiel 22:30, we find a similar situation that we face today. God sought for a man, but could not? find any. This country lacks men standing up and taking charge. Too many men are ducking responsibilities not only in Church, but in their household as well. The reason why we are seeing a surge of women preachers in our Churches is because we don't have enough men preachers WILLING to fill the pulpit and heed the calling of God on their lives.

DAYS OF OLD ?

Many churches, groups and even individuals use the excuse that Paul gave this instruction way back when, because women were illiterate, we're not trained to read or write and did not have discernment, etc and that these instructions do not apply to us today as women can read, write, discern and teach. This may very well be true, women may have the capabilities today. However as shown above, Paul enforces that this is not his words but the words of the Lord. Also it takes us back to an unchanging sovereign God who is the same God of the "old ways" as He is now. This warning, however holds true for new male believers as well as female, as in 1 Timothy 5:22 Paul states: Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure. So we see here that the "laying on of hands" should not be done hastily. In other words, do not choose

your leaders without adequate consideration. Once more I feel led to address the issue that God is the same today as well He in sovereign and is unchanging.

There are women preachers today who claim to be called by God to be preachers. How can we know if they are telling the truth or not? The apostle John wrote, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). The way we test the spirits is to compare what they teach to the Word of God. If what they teach or practice is contrary to the Word of God, we can know without a doubt that they are false. When we read the words of the Holy Spirit teaching us that women are to keep silent in the church, and then we hear women claiming to be called to preach by the Spirit, we can know that they are either deliberate liars or they have been deceived by a spirit other than the Holy Spirit.

They are like the false prophets that the true prophets of God had to contend with in earlier centuries:

"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied" (Jeremiah 23:21).

"Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the Lord" (Jeremiah 29:8-9).

"They have envisioned futility and false divination, saying, 'Thus says the Lord!' But the Lord has not sent them" (Ezekiel 13:6-7).

"Her prophets plastered them with untempered mortar, seeing false visions, and divining lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord God,' when the Lord had not spoken" (Ezekiel 22:28)

Just because certain denominations and churches are allowing Women to be ordained and to preach behind the pulpit does not give the "stamp of approval" for Women to preach and usurp authority over a man! The Bible clearly warns us to not be following traditions of men. The apostle Paul wrote, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

PONDER ON THIS:

What does Genesis say about this? "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." (Gen. 3:16)

What does Mark say about this? "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils." Mark 3:14 Among the twelve listed in Mark 3:15-19, 15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: 16 And Simon he surnamed Peter; 17 And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder: 18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite, 19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house. NOT ONE WOMAN was found. Even Ecclesiastes agrees with this!

It also says in I Tim. 3:1-6, "If a MAN desire the office of a bishop, HE desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach (For if a MAN know not how to rule HIS own house, how shall HE take care of the church of God?

What does the first chapter of Titus say about this? Titus 1:5-8 states, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

Jesus said before the cock crow thrice, not a hen. Yes, God let a donkey (she-ass) talk, so why can't he use women? Point blank, The donkey didn't preach. What does Revelations say about this?

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. (Revelation 2:20) See this was a FALSE PROPHET. This is what women are doing today. Women understand that women can't be a Bishop (I Tim. 3:1-6) or deacon (Titus 3:8-13) so many times they will use Joel 2:38 out of context to

"fit" the desires of their own heart and flesh. Joel 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.

Prophets and prophetesses prophesied NOT preached. PROPH'ESY, v.t. To foretell future events; to predict. To utter predictions; to make declaration of events to come. {Webster 1828)

Joel spoke of the HOLY GHOST THAT WOULD COME. Also, after receiving the spirit of God (Acts 2:4) , they prophesied (Acts 2:47). Here prophesy means to testify/magnify. Read the eight baptisms in the bible, you will see that when time people were converted they PROPHESED ("magnified God, gave thanks," etc.)

When you read scriptures, you must make sure that you RIGHTLY divide the word."(2 Timothy 2:15). "For precept [must be] upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, [and] there a little:"(Isa 28:10). You can NOT take one verse and that's it. Here-a-little, There-a-little. If you stay in ONE verse, then you would think that the word is condemning another verse.

Brothers and sisters beware lest ye fall into condemnation. Rightly dividing the word will let you know that Women can in NO MANNER preach the gospel. They can minister in other ways, but NOT preach.

PONDER THIS ONCE MORE:

The New Testament contains a very clear testimony that there were never any ideas of women preachers. Women were most assuredly converts and admitted into the Church. They performed a great and noble service to their husbands, their children, their friends, the Ministry, and the Church. But not a single one of them was ordained to preach. This is the true light!

My Beloved Sisters in Christ, this teaching is not to place condemnation. It is the simple basic truth of The Word of God. Women can and are used in Ministry all over the world. Women's skills are utilized in praise and worship, teaching Children, teaching other women, Missionary work, this is just to name a few.

However we cannot deny the fact that God and God alone gave Men headship over woman. We were made from Man's rib Gen 2:2 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. Ladies, do you not realize how truly blessed we are. Let's look at that scripture closely. We are of mans rib, not from his head that he may rule over

us, not from his feet to trample us, not from his hand that can abuse us. But from his rib which is located next to his heart, for him to love, under his arm for him to protect, and from side for us to stand by his side.

We must get back to Biblical Basis, to solid foundations Ladies, we must recognize our role and be obedient to it. There is no greater calling than the calling to obedience. We must put our homes and churches back into the commands of God. For you Ladies who have Son's keep in mind the great calling you have to bring up a man of God, a man that will be willing, ready and able to take his Godly role because of the foundation you have set for him. Again Ladies our role is not menial, of less importance, or less than a man's role. It is just as important, meaningful and fulfilling as a man's role. However our roles and callings are different in the eyes of God and as I mentioned before. Man and Woman were designed to compliment one another, not compete with one another.

The Church and Politics

During the last two presidential elections, we have seen a growth in the power of what has been named "the religious right." The conservative, religious element has sought to band itself together in order to exert a strong influence in the political world. Churches have set up voter registration tables in their buildings, there is a newsletter sent out with each candidate scored according to his stand on certain conservative issues, and now we have a man who was a popular preacher running for the office of president. Is such political activity proper for the church? Is the job of the church to set a political agenda and lobby the government to pass appropriate laws? Is the hope of revival in this country to be found in a "Christian" president who will enact "Christian" laws?

Mark 16:15-16

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

The church was given one command when Christ left: preach the gospel! Do we trust the power of the gospel so little that we believe it needs the help of the United States Government? Sadly, "preachers" use the name of Christ in their political speeches more than they do in their preaching. The apostles and preachers of the first century were used of God to establish the truth of Christ by the simple preaching of the gospel - with no help from any fleshly power. Government was against them, established religion was against them, and the intellectual community was against them. But none of these adversaries

accomplished anything in the destruction of the church of Christ. The church did not suffer at the hands of government until the government became its "friend" under the Roman Emperor, Constantine. When "christianity" became accepted and sanctioned by the government, the world was cast into a thousand years of darkness: spiritual, political and intellectual darkness. The moment that we attempt to help God by coupling our efforts with His, He removes His power for He will not share His glory with another: including the governments of men.

Luke 20:25

"And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's."

Scriptures and history have taught us that when the church and government are wed, personal freedoms and the gospel are lost. Let us, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, pray for our leaders, as our Lord has commanded us, and preach Christ to a world of lost men and women. As private citizens of the United States: we may lobby for good and just laws and vote our personal consciences. But, we must be sure to keep our preaching and our politicizing separate!



The only good Christian marriage

Can you be Christian and still Homosexual?

These questions may seem bizarre and even ridiculous to the conscientious Christian, but in today's modern society there are a growing number of professing Christians who steadfastly attempt to defend the idea that homosexuals can be Christian, and they claim to base this upon scripture. The objection is either that it was never a sin, that it was only Old Testament law, that it only applies to practicing Homosexuality or that it only applies to non Christian Homosexuals. There are lots of principles concerning this issue that we should address Biblically, rather than socially, culturally or emotionally. And that is what I will attempt to do in this paper. My purpose in writing this is not to judge anyone's sin, but to establish what is sound historical established Christian doctrine on whether homosexuality is a sin, and if a Christian may profess himself to be homosexual.

Is Homosexuality Really A Sin?

As far as the laws of modern societies go, homosexuality may not be unlawful or even immoral. But as far as the law of God (*which is the paramount law that true Christians are concerned with*), it really shouldn't even be debatable. For the serious Bible believer (*keyword being, serious*) any attempted Biblical defense for this illicit sexual orientation would appear downright silly or even laughable if it weren't so very serious. God's word on the matter is crystal clear (*despite the hollow objections*), and His word is not subject to either private interpretation, personal beliefs, nor the changing social or political climate of the day.

Leviticus 18:22-23

- "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.
- Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it is confusion."

God plainly calls homosexual activity an abomination [*towebah*], which means an abhorrent and disgusting act that is detestable to God. And take note that it is listed right along with other ***unnatural*** acts such as bestiality because God wants us to know that these acts are not natural. To emphasize that, He commands very severe punishment upon anyone who would indulge in these abominations.

Leviticus 20:13

- "If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed ***an abomination***: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them."

These passages don't leave a lot of room for interpretation and most rational people will concede that these verses are speaking against homosexuality. But some choose to argue that it no longer applies to them as believers in Christ under the New Covenant. Their rationale being that because they are under grace and not law, the law against such practices does not apply. But that would be akin to arguing that we can murder in the New Testament because we are no longer under the Old Testament law against murder. Of course, both arguments are blatantly absurd. Just because we are under grace does not mean that we can violate God's moral law with impunity (Romans 6:1-2). Grace does not give us a free hand to sin. It doesn't change God's call for morality nor give us a license to transgress God's laws. So it would seem that the question, "Can homosexuals be Christian" has been answered. This precept of God in Leviticus chapter 20 is very unambiguous, concise, and is plainly stated in the clearest of language. So it bridges on the nonsensical to hear some people attempt to defeat the Creator's condemnation of homosexuality by rationalizing that grace negates God's will. According to the law of God, the activity of a man lying sexually with another man is [*towebah*], meaning detestable. Abomination means it is something that is blatantly unclean and disgusting to our Holy God. This Hebrew word *towebah* literally means loathsome or detestable. So if we are to be led by the Spirit and divine authority of the Holy scriptures, we must accept that homosexuality is something that is both unnatural and abhorrent to God. It is against the harmony and natural order of His divine creation. By precept of scripture it is an unnatural act that God deems unlawful. Anyone attempting to make a defense of Homosexual activity by claiming that it is not really immoral or against God's law is kidding themselves. Likewise, anyone claiming that this merely addresses ritualistic abomination, has no real concept of the supreme authority of the word of God. They are lacking in understanding of the biblical principle that "*God's word is not subject to our private or personal interpretation* (Genesis 40:8)."

Psalms 119:105

- "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

God's word is something that He has set before us to light the path that we are to follow. It is not something that we can attempt to lead in self serving justifications. Yet in our day the plague of homosexuality is sweeping over the world like a malignant disease, and sadly, it infects against every moral, lawful, and chaste fiber of faithfulness and obedience by Christians. But instead of taking warning against this unlawfulness, most Christians sit silently in complacent stupor as it gains respectability, and even acceptability in some Churches. Instead of creating outrage and the need to bear witness to God's rejection of this, Christian Pastors are speaking about toning it down, about (*so-called*) love and compassion and our need for tolerance. These are nothing more

than euphemistic words for capitulation and compromise of morality. In order to remain faithful to God, Christians cannot be deceived by the media or rebellious ministers into tacit approval. They must continue to preach and fight the good fight against the growing apostasies in the Church--such as homosexuality, divorce, fornication, abortion, lusts and all other forms of immorality. For these are perilous and deceptive times in which we live. They are a trial or testing of our faith in Christ. And how we stand reveals whether we have the true Spirit of Godliness within us, or simply have an outward appearance of it.

Second Timothy 3:1-5

- "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.
- For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
- Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,
- Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;
- Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

In greater and greater numbers, professing Christians today have become lovers of themselves (*humanistic*), covetous or materialistic, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, hating parents, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, and lovers of pleasures (hedonism) more than lovers of God. It is in today's arena of degradation that we see not only the growth and tacit acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle, but also the *spurious* denials by many that this is even a transgression. Even though the Bible plainly declares that, "*if a man lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed **an abomination,***" there are those who would remove the ancient landmarks from the Bible with lips dripping with bitter wormwood of rebellion and nullification. Nevertheless, God is not mocked, and all the transparent rationalizations will not hide man's sin in the day of judgment.

Does This Verse Only Condemn "Practicing" Homosexuality?

There is a growing school of thought in some Church circles, which hypothesizes that Leviticus chapter twenty at best describes "*practicing homosexuality*" only, and not homosexual ontology. This back door defense comes without any scriptural validation, and is actually nothing more than groundless debate for the sake of worldly wisdom. Moreover, saying that there are non-practicing homosexuals is akin to saying that there are non-practicing Harlots, or there are non-practicing Murderers. It's absurd. Why would a

Christian Woman want to call herself a Harlot if she is no longer selling herself? Of course, the only honest answer is that, she wouldn't! It is really a ridiculous concept, and yet it has found favour in some Churches that some want to be called Christian, but who also insist on retaining the title of Homosexual (Isaiah 4:1) or Gay Christian. The reasons they give vary, but they all have that same attachment to the concept, refusing to make Christ Lord of their lives. In other words, though they profess outwardly to be of Christ, they really don't want to completely let go or surrender lordship of their old life. And keeping the name allows them to partially hold on to the delusion that it's really not an unlawful thing to have a Homosexual mentality. But is a non-practicing homosexual still guilty of homosexuality? Of course he is. Because the sin is in the very "thought process" of this rebellion, not merely in the physical act itself. Would a Christian who has an adulterous thought pop into his head, then choose to call himself a Christian adulterer? God forbid! Likewise, there is no such thing as a Christian Homosexual. The mere fact that someone would have a desire to retain the title homosexual, while professing their new life in Christ, indicates that they have not yet truly repented of their sin. It is actually a dire confession that they desire to retain certain name rights to that former lifestyle. The fact is, in the true Christian who is born from above, there has to be a great spiritual change. We are no longer swine, but sheep. Would anyone want to retain the moniker, swine? No, as it makes no sense.

Of course, the modernist would protest, "*What's in a name?*" But I would retort that one who desires a name that signifies something that is an abomination to God, should instead question, "what is really in his heart." Because what we once were, in Christ Jesus we are no more.

Second Corinthians 13:5

- "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

For the very title "Homosexual" delineates sin against God and illustrates a continuing mind set that is adversarial to obedience. This is the deception of our day that goes unchallenged in most Churches. The wretched "political correctness" within our society wherein we look upon homosexuality as not so much a deliberate sin, but as an involuntary lifestyle. We have been so brainwashed by the constant indoctrination by the mainstream media that without knowing it, we have let man's word supersede God's word. But a non-practicing homosexual is just as much in sin against God as a practicing one would be. For it is self-evident that he has not truly repented of his sin nature wherein he would no longer "desire" to be called Homosexual. He doesn't yet understand that he cannot take upon himself the name of Christ, and also retain

the name Homosexual. The terms are as mutually exclusive as the terms abominable and righteousness. It's like saying that you are a "Christian Abomination," or that you are a "Christian Whore." No one would say those things because they realize that this type terminology is contradictory to Christianity, not something that can go hand in hand with it. We cannot claim to be "Christian Homosexuals" because it is a contradiction in terms.

Will The Homosexual Be Saved?

A former Homosexual who has turned to Christ can be saved. But will someone who is a Homosexual be saved? According to some liberal philosophers in the Church, yes. But not according to the inerrant word of God. Scripture states quite plainly that those who lay with a man as they would with womankind, shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Don't look at me as judge, for those are God's words, not mine. Or shall we defer to the unrighteous words of Pastors or teachers instead? There will always be those who choose to ignore what is written, or who make up their own laws and rules concerning doctrines of the Church. But if we will "receive" God's word of truth, there can be no mistaking what He has said. That is to say, if we are honest with ourselves (1st John 2:4). With the Spirit of Christ within us, we will surrender to the authority of God's word and not be deceived by human nullification of it.

First Corinthians 6:9

- "...be not *deceived*: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor *abusers of themselves with mankind*, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God."

Note that the caution by God is that we "*be not deceived*," and that alone should alert us that we must be aware that there will be those who will try and deceive us by claiming that these people "shall" inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Selah! In other words, Preachers telling us that adulterers, drunkards, and homosexuals can be Christian and will inherit the kingdom. God says no, "be not deceived" by these ideas, they shall not inherit it. So for people today to blatantly ignore that precept and claim that they will (*as so many do*), is both confusion and a denial that God's word is actually true.

Of course, this does not mean that a Christian who was formerly an adulterer, drunkard, or homosexual cannot ever in a period of weakness fall back into one of those sins. What it means is that they are a new creation whose desire will now be to do the will of God, rather than their own. Thus, while they may sin, they are no longer adulterers, homosexuals, or drunkards. So even if they should stumble and sin, they will no longer live in that sin. They will have repentance,

and their sins will be forgiven because they have an advocate in heaven (Romans 8:26-27), and His Spirit dwell within them always. Likewise, they have no desire to be called adulterers, homosexuals, or drunkards, for they understand that the old things are passed away, and that Grace is not license to continue in sin.

Galatians 5:13

- "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

How shall they that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? How can they who are called to grace and liberty use that liberty to continue in sin (Romans 6:1-2). They will no longer live comfortably in their sin, but will shun it, confess it, repent of it, and understand in their heart that it is evil. This will become something that they want to distance themselves from, not something they want to keep near. They will not have the mind-set that Homosexuality is something they want to retain "name rights" to.

Indeed, I have heard those who arrogantly proclaim:

"I don't practice, but I am a Homosexual and proud of it. And I am a Christian, no matter what anyone says."

With all due respect, this is merely another example of the insidious delusion of the spirit of antichrist. To be sure, it doesn't matter what I or any other man says. But what does matter is what God says. And without judging, I'm afraid that the sad truth is that this man was probably no more a Christian than Judas was in confessing to be one of the Apostles. No more a Christian than cult leaders who stand up routinely boldly calling on the name of the Lord as their Saviour. They all delude themselves because they lack the Spirit of truth. The Spirit that would discern that we can be former thieves, former pornographers, and former homosexuals, but we cannot confess to still be those things and be Christian. A Christian is a "new" creation sealed (*secured*) with the Holy Spirit. And so they would no longer want to be called that which is abominable to God. Rather than a source of pride, this title would be an abomination to them, the same as it is to God.

Moreover, those Pastors who teach such contradicting doctrines to gay men and women, deceive a great many of them into thinking that they can have peace of mind, when in fact there is no peace with God (Jeremiah 8:11). Thus, these pastors have the greater sin. For to say that a homosexual can inherit the kingdom is not only "dangerous" (*as it gives those looking for an excuse, a false sense of security*), but it is also false prophecy of peace. According to God's very

own words in 1st Corinthians 6:9, Homosexuals will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. But the faithful witness can give hope in God's word that they need not fret, because those who have cast that name aside for the name of Christ, can.

Colossians 3:9-10

- "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;
- And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:"

The casting off of former things and placing them behind us is an integral part of the Salvation process. And unfortunately, that is what many professing Christians and Pastors do not understand.

Some Say That Word Simply Describes Temple Prostitution

The word in 1st Corinthians 6:9 that is translated "*Abusers of themselves with mankind*" in the KJV, is actually the Greek word [*arsenokoites*], meaning "to lay with a male." In the literal, to "bed a male," the same sin which God called an abomination (Leviticus 20:13). This term is from the Greek words [*arsen*], meaning male, and [*koite*] meaning bed (from the root [*keimai*], meaning lay). And combined in this context, they illustrate the sense of lying with a man sexually. God unambiguously declares that these shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Now let's be clear that I didn't say that, God said that and I bore witness to what He said. And He said it as plain as it can be said. The half-baked theory that the objection may simply describe Temple Prostitution is a contrived cocktail of conjecture and supposition. It is not an interpretation that has its foundation in the pertinent scriptures at all, but a theory by those who analyse cultures, and is unsubstantiated by the Holy Canon itself. Clearly, the word there means to "lay a male". And for anyone to take that clearly understandable word, and inject it with an extra-biblical and self-serving interpretation that it really means men who sell themselves for money, is tortuous of the text. In biblical terms, it is called "wresting" or twisting the scriptures to make them conform to one's own ideas. The truth is, there is not even one iota, jot or tittle about the Temple, nor about selling, nor about prostitution. To presuppose and then inject this secular idea into scripture, is in the final analysis "adding to God's word." Not to mention the fact that we don't understand scripture in a vacuum, meaning that this is not the only passage that condemns males lying with males (what is today commonly called Homosexuality). Every verse that speaks about this practice would have to be twisted in order to support such a jaded conclusion.

But this is the kind of rationalization and self-justification that goes into the defence

of breaking God's laws. It always starts (*like the serpent in the garden*) with the words, "...hath God Said?" From there, Satan will proceed to sow the seed of doubt about what God actually said, and if He actually means it. Men are quick to "read into" the scriptures and inject their own biased agenda about what scripture means (*though it didn't say*). Because then he can cast doubt on the word of God really meaning "*men who lay with men.*" And then those who want to believe what is right in their own eyes will have an excuse to formulate their own rebellious views about homosexuality. In their minds they can then do so without having to blatantly call God's word a lie. In their own self-justification they can declare, "...it is not that we don't believe God, it is just that we think we can interpret this another way." i.e., the strict biblical view is only our opinion.

We Are All Sinners, Aren't Homosexuals Just Sinners Too?

Yes, this is true. But Christians are not Homosexuals. Neither are they Whores, Thieves, Murderers and Drunkards. The distinction is that these are not terms for Christians. There is a difference between being a homosexual and being a sinner, and it's not just semantics. We may fall into sin, but we will not any longer live that former lifestyle. In the Spirit that dwells with us, we have an earnest desire to repent or turn away from former things. Not a desire to retain the title in order to keep some "vicarious" pleasure in it, but to make it "dead" to us. This will be our sincere desire when we become true Christians. Those very verses we have read illustrate just this particular principle.

First Corinthians 6:9-11

- "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,
- Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.
- ***And such were some of you:*** but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God".

And such WERE some of you, but not anymore. That is the mindset of a true Christian. Not one of, "I still want to be called Homosexual," but one of, "Such as I once was, but not anymore." They are washed now, so that they will not continue being a homosexual, even though they might fall into that sin. They will not live it, but instead repent of it and in sanctification grow in grace. That is the mind of Christ and the frame of mind of a true Christian.

Romans 6:1-4

- "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?
- God forbid. ***How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?***
- Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?
- Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, ***even so we also should walk in newness of life.***"

We walk in newness of life because the old man is passed away. How can we walk in newness of life while walking in the old man. How can we still be calling ourselves Harlots, Drunkards, or Homosexuals? Jesus, through His Spirit, can move the homosexual to stop living in this destructive lifestyle. He can remove the sensual desire for a person of the same sex. But Homosexuals will never understand this truth if professed Christians keep telling them that they can remain a Homosexual and still be Christian.

Hebrews 11:6

- "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him".

We witness to them that becoming a Christian means that we have had a new birth (2nd Corinthians 5:17). God not only forgives us and cleanses us from all unrighteousness (1st John 1:9), but He give us of His Spirit that provides the strength to not sin this way anymore (Romans 8:26). Jesus wonderfully forgave the women caught in adultery, but He also told her, "..go and sin no more (John 8:11)." In a phrase, "Truth, inspires change."

But The Word Homosexual Is Not In Scripture

The fact is, the words "homosexual" or "gay" are merely modern translations for lifestyles and acts that are almost as old as dirt. It is simply a euphemism describing what God calls the vile affections of people who lay sexually with those of the same gender. The identical word that modern man uses ***doesn't have to be in scripture***, because what the word represents is unquestionably in scripture. Just as the word embezzlement is a traditional euphemism that simply means someone is stealing. And annulment is a traditional euphemism meaning divorce. And abortion is a traditional euphemism that means killing a baby. These replacement words are generally devised to hide or cloak the harsh reality of their true meaning. They are used so that it makes whatever it defines

somewhat easier for people to accept. That is why even the term "Homosexual" has a negative connotation and has generally been changed to "gay." Think about it. Who would accept these ideas if we were to say, "I'm going to kill my child before it is born." That's why this act of murder is replaced with the word "abortion," and now with even less harsh sounding euphemisms. But God has no such political agendas, and He calls these sins exactly what they are. He calls homosexuality, vile affections, men lying with men, women with women, doing that which is unseemly, unnatural and abominable. That's what God calls it. So simply claiming the English word "Homosexual" is not in the Hebrew or Greek manuscripts does not loose man from the law of God against the practice. We can eliminate the word Homosexual all together, but then we'd have to call it what the Bible does. A vile unnatural Abomination. But in our day, that would not be considered politically correct. It would not be a loving Christian (*gasp*) attitude to call anything by the same term that God gives it. Nevertheless, while it may not be politically correct, it is Biblically incorrect to say anything less than the scriptures say.

Some Churches say The Homosexual Gene Is A God Given Inherited Nature

That is not only a ludicrous statement, it is a blasphemous statement. Heresy in the Church is also nothing new, but it is growing by leaps and bounds today. The conscientious Christian does not go by what some Churches, the psychologists or scientists says, they go by what God says as their authority. Homosexuality is not a nature that men are born with (*except it is the nature of sin*), on the contrary it embodies all that is "AGAINST" nature. These professing Christians who make this claim have been brainwashed by an arrogant and immoral society, and have totally forsaken God's word for the wisdom of the world.

First Corinthians 3:18-20

- "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.
- For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.
- And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."

In Christ, we find that real wisdom is in what God says. And He declares that this is not natural, it is just the opposite of natural. And the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18). We read in Romans Chapter one that there is a logical progression that leads to this wrath of God.

They hold down the truth in unrighteousness, exchanging it for a lie worshipping and serving the creation rather than the Creator. Therefore God gave them up to these vile affections where even their women changed the "*natural use*" into that which is against nature, and they encouraged others to do the same. That is why the wrath of God justly falls on them where they are worthy of death and have no excuse.

Romans 1:26-27

- "For this cause God gave them up to *vile affections*: for even their women did change the Natural use into that which is *Against Nature*!
- And likewise also the men, leaving the Natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; Men with Men working that which is *unseemly*, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet."

God illustrates homosexuality indicative of man's contemptible degradation and deep seated rebellion against Him. Thus we see once again that His word is 180 degrees opposite of what the world says is true, being wise in their own conceits. The homosexual lust within individuals is not born of their so-called "God given" birthright. It is not a Godly alternative lifestyle. And it is not anyone's natural affection. It is just as God says, a vile [*atimia*] or disgraceful affection and unseemly [*aschemosune*], indecent or shameful behavior. If we claim that it is a congenital natural desire that homosexuals are following, then to whom is God speaking? Is He speaking to the air? Indeed, who are we to believe? God is addressing this on a moral level, not a physiological level. Only if we are in total rebellion against the word can these passages be adulterated to deny what God clearly declares. Because according to the text, homosexual behaviour is evidence of an active rebellion against the creator. So as the scripture declares, "let God be true and every man a liar" -Romans 3:4. For the wrath of God is revealed against the rebellious wherein God gives them up, allows them to go further into their degradation because they loved themselves, the creation, more than the creator. Both man and woman have a natural nature, and to pervert that nature (*man with man and woman with women*) is a grievous sin against this divinely created order.

Deuteronomy 22:5

- "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for *all that do so are abomination* unto the LORD thy God."

This specific scriptural text forbidding cross dressing addresses the "visible" perversion of the natural order that God has established. It shows us quite

plainly that God looks upon these unnatural acts, not as frivolous or an acceptable alternative lifestyle, but as an abomination. Nor is it harmless or that deemed innocuous behaviour. The fact is, God has always been crystal clear on the matter, it is man who tries to distort God's words for his own selfish purposes. It is society who tries to make up their own rules and laws governing what is natural and what is not. In God's word, what is natural is not determined by what society wants sexually, but how God created people to function sexually. And to rationalize this away claiming, "*it's just how some people are born,*" is rebellion against what God said. He said, ***be not deceived!*** It's not natural affection, it's not a God given nature but sin against both God and nature. Thus it is both illogical and irrational for anyone professing to be a Christian (*a follower of Christ*) to claim that God gave this nature to some people (*constitutional homosexuality*).

First Timothy 1:9-10

- "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,
- For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;"

The doctrines and rationalizations going on in the Church today about homosexuality would have been unbelievable just fifty years ago, but now so much of the Church is spiritually depraved that often it is considered "Christian love" to claim that they are saved. It is considered an act of compassion to neglect to witness to them of the wages of such sin. And it is actually considered hurtful and judgmental to bear faithful testimony to what God actually says. But nothing could be further from the truth. Homosexuals are what they are because of the sin nature which takes different paths in each individual. If I am a habitual fornicator, can I claim I'm that way because I have a gene that makes me lust after many women? Most certainly not, because sin is in all of us and cannot be excused by simply saying it's in the genes. Do I have a gene that makes me a drunkard? Society would (and does) say so. Do I have a gene that makes me a criminal? Sure, all things are possible when you throw the word of God out the window in favour of man's own vain imaginations and the man's vaunted declarations. The truth is, we all have the gene. It's called, "the stain of sin," and it has been passed down from generation to generation since the fall. Anything more than that, is self-serving rationalization.

Are Heterosexuals, Heterosexuals, because of Their Sin Nature Too?

Some people have attempted to equate Homosexual activity with Heterosexual activity. This of course is the obligatory "Straw Man," and it seems there is one in almost every argument. But equating heterosexuality to homosexuality is like equating sexual activity, with fornication. It cannot be done righteously. Because one is always a sin, and the other may not be a sin under certain circumstances. For example, a heterosexual relationship is not a sin so long as it is done lawfully within the bounds of marriage. While a homosexual relationship is sin at "anytime." Even non-practicing homosexual relationships are sin because (like adultery) the sin has its genesis in the mind. And so to equate the two is like comparing apples and oranges. One is always unnatural and vile affection in God's eyes, and the other is a natural union between a man and woman when they are married. Our Lord actually clarified this natural, normal relationship.

Matthew 19:4-5

- "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,
- And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?"

This is what God has from the beginning defined as the natural sexual relationship. A man with a woman joined inextricably as one flesh. So we cannot equate Homosexuality to Heterosexuality. If these defenders were to equate homosexuality with fornication (*both unlawful sexual activity*) then they would have a case. But they can't do this because that would defeat their purpose in trying to justify the act as lawful. But to equate it with heterosexual activity is flat out ridiculous.

Second Timothy 3:1-4

- "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.
- For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
- without natural affection, truce breakers, false ACCUSERS, incontinent, fierce, despisers of THOSE that are good. Traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;
- having a FORM of Godliness, but denying the POWER thereof: from such turn away."

In other words, those who claim the name of Christ, and yet will deny the Lord's word, are to be expected in this life. And expected even more so as we reach the

latter days and come into great tribulation. And from such unfaithful people, *faithful* Christians are commanded of God to turn away. We are to shun unity with these people, lest we be deemed to be in agreement with their apostasy. Clearly, these perilous times of the Church falling away from the faith, were not unforeseen by God.

Why Then Are Some Churches Teaching This?

Two things that we should remember. One is that all those who call themselves Christ (Christian), are not truly of Christ. Two is that all false prophets and gospels have the distinct ability to totally ignore God's written word about anything, anytime they choose. They do so in order that they may follow whatever teachings that they desire to follow. Whether doctrines of homosexuality, tacitly condoning abortion, Divorce, women pastors, remarriage, charismatic theories, miraculous speaking in tongues, signs and wonders, or any other false gospel. There will always be those who support some un-biblical doctrine. And it usually comes down to the same common denominator. They all "reject" the accumulative written word of God that says one thing, in order that they can take something out of context and believe what is right in their own eyes. Whether it is what their Church leaders say, or what society deems appropriate, or their own will in what they want, there are always methods for them to get around (Deuteronomy 5:32) scripture. And usually it is by saying that, "*this verse doesn't really mean what it says.*" They have become willful in giving themselves over to carnality.

Jude 1:7

- "Even as *Sodom and Gomorrah*, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after *strange flesh*, are set forth *for an example*, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

The sin of unlawful unnatural sex, or men going after strange or unusual flesh, is clearly prohibited. The Greek word translated strange is [*heteros*] meaning other, or different. In other words, man not going "naturally" after women, but after that "other" or abnormal. Man with man and woman with woman. Indeed the city of Sodom is where we get the word Sodomy. How appropriate that God declares here that Sodom is set forth as *an example* of the wages of this unnatural fornication of going after strange flesh. From the Old Testament to the New testament, by divine inspiration of God this very same warning of this city as an example is repeated.

Second Peter 2:6

- "And turning the cities of *Sodom and Gomorrha* into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, *making them an ensample* unto those that after should live ungodly.."

Clearly, the example of Sodom is for us who live today. It is written that we might read of it and learn, and remember why God judged them. Sadly, many Churches today have forgotten or either refuse to be taught by the lessons of scripture. They read, but they don't "spiritually" hear what they read. They look, but they don't "spiritually" see what they are looking at. They have no fear of God (Romans 3:17) that they would humbly receive His word of truth that homosexuality is abnormal and an abomination. Their conscience is seared so that they can effectively completely wrest or ignore scripture without any pangs of guilt. They lack the true love of God that 1st John 5:2-3 declares is illustrated in "keeping His word." The love wherein there is an earnest desire to not only seek truth, but the humility to look at ourselves honestly in repentance rather than rationalization. The rebellious lack the reverential fear of God that His word informs us is the genesis of wisdom.

Psalms 111:10

- "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever."

The sum and substance of true wisdom is to fear God and to abide by His laws. Yet when quoting God's word (word for word), how many times have you heard the protest, "*..well, that's just your interpretation.*" Clearly the word witnessed faithfully is not received, and this is the power of the spirit of the great deceiver. When man has no reverential fear, nor conscience that would bother him when contradicting what God says, he is lost in the wilderness of unbelief. And many are so brainwashed and indoctrinated that denying the word of God doesn't even register "as a denial" anymore. In other words, a spiritual blindness where they don't look upon the word testified to them as God's inerrant word, they look upon it as something that is coming from you personally. Thus it is something they can try and get around by any means necessary. They deem it as something abstract, something apart from the Bible that stands in the way of their beliefs. And this is because they don't really know God in the personal sense where He is ruler (Lord) of their lives. They may know God intellectually, where they profess faith, but they deny God and His faith by their action in refusing to keep His word. As 2nd Timothy 3 declared, "having a FORM of Godliness, but denying the POWER thereof." In other words, having only its external form or appearance, but inwardly they do not have the Spirit of God. For "that" is the power of Godliness that is more than its form or appearance. Like clouds with

no water carried about of winds, they cannot retain or keep God's word, and this is why they can without conscience support homosexuality. The true Christian has the Spirit-led desire to preserve or keep the word of God faithfully, and that means they will not deny what it says for their own sakes.

Psalms 119:11

- "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."

Their desire is to conserve or preserve God's word within ourselves, to hide it or treat it as a precious treasure to be carefully kept. And being in this way Biblically conservative, was the norm for hundreds of years. But in our day this preserving of the word has fallen by the wayside.

Luke 8:15

- "But that on the good ground are they, which in a HONEST and good heart, having heard the Word **KEEP it**, and bring forth fruit with patience."

In fact the very word "keep" that is used here means to 'hold fast,' or to guard against loss. It means to preserve that it not suffer loss. True Christians are in fact conservative with regards to scripture, for every true believer keeps (preserves) God's word faithfully, by confessing rather than denying it. They may sin, but they don't rationalize it away, or deny that it is sin. That is keeping or holding fast God's word.

Psalms 32:5

- "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah."

The conscientious Christian preserves God's word of truth. King David is a good example of this. He sinned greatly, yet he didn't rationalize it away as not being sin. He repented of it as sin. But many people today call themselves by the name of Christ, and they have the belief that they are true believers, but God tells us that unless they are preservers of the word of God, they are simply kidding themselves. For they don't really know Him as Lord at all. And indeed, this is the Lord's declaration, not my personal judgment.

First John 2:3-5

- "And hereby we do KNOW that we know Him, IF we KEEP His commandments.
- He that saith, I know Him, and KEEPETH NOT His commandments, *is a Liar, and the truth is not in Him.*
- But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected: HEREBY know we that we are in Him."

I may say he is kidding himself, but God says he is lying to himself that he is a Christian that knows the Lord. Those are strong words. And this "lying" is why some can make statements like, "Homosexuals can be Christians and still remain Homosexuals," or that, "Jesus is not really God," or that they personally "spoke to God in a unknown tongue last Sunday." Because they have forsaken the word and are blinded and deceived by their own lusts, feelings, teachers, or what seems right in their own eyes. Can Homosexuals be Christians? No! God says Homosexuals cannot inherit the Kingdom. Homosexuals can become Christians, but Homosexuals cannot be Christians. Is Homosexuality a Sin? Of course it is sin. It is only the sinful, willful, prideful nature of fallen man that insists on denying such an obvious truth. It is better to humbly let God lead, rather than arrogantly attempt to be our own god and lead ourselves.

Proverbs 15:10

- "Correction is grievous unto him that forsaketh the way: and he that hateth reproof shall die."

All false Christians have the inherent pridefulness where they will not receive reproof of God. They will forsake His ways that they may walk their in their own path. Just as the Scribes and Pharisees did, who also all knew the scriptures so very well. But they didn't know God, and so all their learning was useless as far as coming to the real truth "of" the scriptures.

Second Timothy 3:7

- "ever learning, and yet never able to come to the knowledge of TRUTH".

The acceptance of homosexuality is in the spirit of disobedience, not the Spirit of truth. It is a rebellious, haughty and lifted up spirit, not the broken and contrite spirit that receives God's truth. And most of all, it shows no spirit to do as 2nd Corinthians 13:5 exhorts. To examine ourselves with God's word, and prove ourselves that we are truly in the faith, and not just blindly following what we want to follow. These exhortations of God roll off many professed Christians like water rolling off the back of a duck. They simply cannot seem to

comprehend the truth that when they are reading scripture, it is actually God talking. It's not the writer's opinion, it's not my personal opinion, it's not a private interpretation, it's divinely inspired truth that God "fully expects" us to be obedient to.

Second Peter 1:20-21

- “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.
- For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

Thus when God's word says homosexuals (1st Corinthians 6:9) shall not inherit the kingdom, it's not subject to private interpretation. It says what it was divinely inspired to say. So let us open our hearts to receive God's truth concerning Homosexuality. Society cannot define God's laws nor change His immutable principles. The only way we will arrive at a Biblical consensus concerning this question is by “receiving” everything God has declared about it throughout His Holy word. Christians need to make the effort and find the time to study the Bible with the mind of Christ, that they are open to receive what He says. As Bible believers we must all examine ourselves that we express and reaffirm the clear sense of scripture on this issue. God will enlighten anyone on the subject who is honestly seeking truth. “Seek and ye shall find” is a faithful promise, not an empty platitude. Let us then preach the unadulterated truth of scripture, and not the compromises and blasphemies that often pass for the gospel.



Christian Courtship

What does the Bible say about dating? God's model for male/ female relationships. How does a person relate to a person of the opposite sex that we are not married to? As a brother or sister. 1 Tim. 5:1-2. " Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity." So, biblically, if we are single, we treat each other as brothers and sisters; or, if we are married, as husband or wife. There is no Biblical model for a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship. As Christians, we have made do with the world's model for relationships when we could look to God's Word for guidance and experience His best in our romantic relationships.[J. Harris]

History of Dating.

Before dating came along, "calling" was the established practice. A guy would go to a girl's home to talk with her, meet her parents and possibly have some refreshments. Calling placed its emphasis on parental involvement and gave the girl the upper hand in the relationship. She was able to either accept or refuse a caller and, because all contact took place in her home, control the environment. Around the turn of the century, the invention of the automobile gave rise to getting out of the home and going on "dates," In the new system of dating, the guy had the upper hand. He was taking the girl into the outside world and covering the expense of transportation, dining, and entertainment. Money became the central issue of dating. The more money a man had, the better date he could provide and, logically, the better girl he could take out. World War II, which took over 16 million American men away from the homeland, greatly affected dating in America. Before the War, it was desirable to be dating as many different people as possible. At dances, girls and boys dreaded being stuck

with a single partner. A popular girl expected to have a "stag line" of boys waiting to dance with her. But when the dust had settled after the war, all young people wanted was constancy. Dating now moved into the "going steady" era. The war also brought a rise in young marriages. The result was that teens at even earlier ages began entering the dating system. This early dating pattern flourished with the support of parents who by encouraging their children (organized dances for twelve-year-olds in strapless formals, etc.) hoped to gain some control in the mate selection. Unfortunately, these parents had little foresight into where early dating would lead. What parents once encouraged in the 1950's is today out of control, as premarital sex is not only acceptable but expected .[Dating Problems, Courtship Solutions by Josh Harris]

Dating Dangers

1.Loss of purity. The following is a quote from a book called From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth Century America by Beth L. Bailey: "In contemporary America, living together has become a conventional step in the path to marriage and an acceptable arrangement on its own terms. Sexual intercourse is a conventionally assumed part of long-term relationships (even among teenagers, for better or worse), and a clear possibility on first dates." I think we would all agree that this is against the laws of God. But exactly what does God's Word say about sexual behavior between unmarried persons? First of all, God's Word forbids fornication. 1 Cor. 6:18 says "Flee fornication." In some versions the word fornication is translated "sexual immorality." This is the Greek word "porneia" which Vine's dictionary defines as "illicit sexual intercourse." Does this mean that anything short of intercourse would be permitted? Jesus says in Matthew 5 that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 1 Tim 5:1& 2 says to treat older women as mothers and younger women as sisters with absolute purity. God commands us to be pure--Phillipians 1:9-10 "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ". 2 Timothy 2:22-- "Flee youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." 1 Cor. 6:18--"Flee sexual immorality." This is some advice given by a well-known Christian author in answer to the question "How far can you go?" : "Much depends on your unique child and the person he or she is dating, as well as on your feelings as a family. It also depends on the emotional and spiritual maturity of your child and his or her date. One more way to put this to your child is to say,'Don't light a fire that you can't put out.' In other words don't create arousal that you can't satisfy in a God-honoring way. Sexual arousal is meant to lead to sexual intercourse, and once that fire starts to burn, it can quickly turn into a wildfire that is extremely difficult to control. Some couples can hold hands and

kiss a little without losing control, but others will need pretty much to abstain from even light kissing. Again much depends on your particular child and the individual he or she is dating." What are the fallacies of this advice? The Bible gives sexual privileges only to married couples. This includes sexual arousal. How will your child know what will cause sexual arousal in each person he or she dates? After they find out what stage is too far, having crossed that line in their relationship, they may not be able to go backwards. By putting ourselves in this position, are we obeying the clear Biblical commands to "flee temptation" and "flee youthful lust?" In fact, this same author admits in the same chapter, "Although I can't say there should never be any physical contact, it is safest and appropriate for your teen to have as a principle of dating that he or she avoid it." Can we expect this much control out of our teens? Would we be able to exercise this much control ourselves, especially if we feel we are "in love" with the person we are dating? Here is another example of typical advice given to teens on how to handle temptation when dating. "Decide ahead of time how far you will and will not go on a date. Then when that danger point approaches, put on the brakes and say stop! What are your intentions? Then calmly explain to them your convictions and ask them not to go any further." Let's try to evaluate the wisdom of that advice. For example: Suppose the following letter was written to Abby: Dear Abby: I always drive 30 miles an hour on the interstate highways. Although I know the speed limit is 65, I do not feel safe driving that speed and I believe in being cautious. My problem is : How do I handle the rude behaviour of other motorists? They drive by me honking and making rude gestures. Sometimes they roll down their windows and shout at me. Please tell me what I should do. Sincerely, Slow in Seattle

Abby writes back: Dear Slow in Seattle: The next time someone harasses you, I suggest you do the following. Roll down your window and gesture to them to stop. Ask them "What are your intentions?" Then explain to them courteously your convictions about driving and ask them to please stop harassing you. Sincerely, Abby

Well, this seems like pretty ridiculous advice, doesn't it?. That woman doesn't need to learn how to deal with faster drivers, she needs to get off the interstate highway. Let me suggest to you that we, as Christian parents, may need to get our teenagers off of the "dating highway." [Holzmann] We like to think of purity as a line that you draw. We try to get as close to that line as possible with out stepping over it. But Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5) that purity is an attitude of the heart. How can we, as parents, help our young people remain pure? God designed our sexuality as a physical expression of the oneness of marriage. He places many restrictions on it because of its emotional and spiritual consequences. A man and woman who make the commitment of marriage gain the right to express themselves sexually with each other. But if

you are not married to someone, you do not have that right, that claim, to another person's body. Let's look at two scriptures about the ownership of the body. 1 Cor 6:19-20 says our bodies belong to God. 1 Corinthians 7:4 says married people own each other's bodies. Nowhere in scripture are we given rights to the body of someone we are not married to. We all know that there are young Christians who are not married who are sexually intimate. We all know examples of young Christian girls who have gotten pregnant out of wedlock by young Christian boys. Being a Christian does not inoculate you from sexual impurity. And parents, if you think "My child won't do that because he or she is a strong Christian", you are fooling yourselves. Author Reb Bradley says that the pregnancy rate among Christian teens is actually higher than that among non-Christian teens because Christian girls do not think they will get in a situation where they might get pregnant, so they don't use birth control. In a survey published in "Intelligencer Journal," Lancaster, PA, 70% of the teens said they had lost their virginity. Their parents were asked "How many of you think your children have lost their virginity?" Only 14% of the parents of these teens thought their children had lost their virginity. Think back to your own dating relationships. We all know that as a relationship progresses, the desire for physical intimacy increases. Dwight Harvey Small says that we reach "tolerance" points in physical intimacy and diminishing returns make an urgent demand for something more. You may have experienced it. At first handholding is a thrill, then that's no longer enough, then we move to light kissing, then that's not enough and we feel the desire for deep kissing, and on and on it goes. I say all this to prove the point that for teenagers, maintaining a perfectly pure dating relationship is very difficult. Josh Harris (a 22 year old man who has written a book on courtship) says that he believes that Christians can't keep from abusing God's gift of sex before marriage unless they choose to stay off the dating path altogether. I think we will be doing our young people a great service by presenting to them an alternative to this minefield of temptations. One study published in 1987 (in Youthworker) showed that 91 % of girls allowed to begin dating at twelve will have sex before graduating from high school. Fifty-six percent of those who date at age thirteen, 53 percent of those who date at age fourteen, 40 percent of those who date at age fifteen, and 20 percent of those who date at age sixteen will have intercourse before graduation day. So you can see that the earlier a girl begins to date, the greater is her chance of losing her virginity by the time she graduates from high school. Colossians 3:5 says " Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry." James 1:14-15 says " but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

2. Taking focus off of God and His will for their future. The teenage years are years that are relatively free of adult responsibilities. Most teens have their food and clothing provided by their parents. They don't have a house or a spouse or children to take care of. It can be a time when they focus a lot of their time and thoughts on learning more about God and his will for their lives. 1 Cor 7 :32-33 "I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs--how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world--how he can please his wife--" When teens are playing the "dating game" much of their thoughts are occupied with "How can I get a date?" or "Who would I like to date?" or "How can I make enough money to afford to date?" When they are in a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship much of their time is spent being with the other person and thinking about how to please the other person. Often, a person's long term plans are made not around "What would God have me do?" but "How can I arrange my life to spend as much time as possible with my boyfriend or girlfriend?" By getting off of the dating highway, young people spend more of their time pursuing godliness and Christian service.

3. Isolates a person from other relationships. I remember when I was in college I had a steady boyfriend for 2 1/2 years. During that time I spent almost all of my free time with him. After he broke up with me my senior year, I realized how much I had isolated myself from my friends. I missed 2 1/2 years of time when I could have been developing friendships with others and drawing closer to the Lord.

4. Sets teens up for heartbreak. Suppose you don't have any money, but you want to go shopping just to "see what's out there." So you don't have any money, but you see some outfits that look like something you would like to buy, so you try them on. Now suppose you find an outfit that looks great on you and the price is right, and you don't think you'll ever be able to find another outfit that would suit you as well. Of course you can't buy it, so what do you do? Do you say, " Excuse me, but would you put this on layaway for me for five years?" Dating is like window shopping without money. You're trying out relationships when you don't have the ability to make a commitment. Dating provides a way to experience the exciting, romantic side of a relationship without commitment or responsibility. [J. Harris] However, God's word says there is a season for everything, a time for every purpose under heaven (Ecc. 3:1). The time for romance is when you're looking for a mate, when you're prepared to make a commitment. Josh Harris says: Intimacy is the reward of commitment. You've probably heard the song "Breaking up is Hard to Do." and if you've experienced it, you know how painful it is whether you're on the giving or receiving end. The emotional bonds formed in these relationships can be strong and the pain can be very great when these bonds are broken. Let's examine some reasons why

breaking up is so painful: (1) It involves ownership. We've already talked about how biblically God is our owner, and when we get married, our spouse has certain ownership rights to us. In a serious dating relationship, boys and girls claim ownership rights for each other. Have you heard the phrases "you're my girl" or "you belong to me"? When you see a boy and girl holding hands, what assumption do you make? That they have a bond between them. That they are a couple. That they belong to each other. (2) A second reason breaking up is so painful is that a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship is exclusive or one-at-a time. Just as you just have one spouse at a time, so you usually just have one boyfriend or girlfriend at a time. (3) A third reason is that there is usually some degree of physical-sexual intimacy. This intimacy conveys some promises to the other person whether intentional or unintentional. When one of the couple reneges on these promises, there are feelings of betrayal. and (4) Fourthly, there exists a sense of obligation to keep going together. If one person begins to want out of the relationship, he usually struggles with how to tell the other person. There is often a feeling of guilt about promises that were made that are not going to be kept. And (5) lastly, the boyfriend/girlfriend relationship requires some form of spoken end. Usually, there is some form of confrontation or a letter or a phone call to end the relationship. Now I want you to look over this list and think about the similarities to marriage there are in this list. (Review list). Can you see why breaking up is so hard to do? There are all the implied promises of marriage without the commitment to the other person.[Holzmann] When I think back over all the pain I endured in broken relationships and the pain I inflicted on those that I broke relationships with, I want to spare my children this. This is not a necessary part of life. I see nowhere in scripture where this is a necessary part of life. There is another alternative.

If we are not going to date, how do we handle relationships with the opposite sex? Brother/sister model.¹ Tim 5:1&2. In treating members of the opposite sex as brothers and sisters in Christ, we are to seek to bless them with our speech and behavior. Phillipians 2:3-4." Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." Gal. 5:13 "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature ; rather, serve one another in love."

Two of John Holzman's rules for treating the opposite sex are (1) I will treat people in whom I have no romantic interest no worse than I treat people in whom I have a romantic interest. In other words, he would do nothing to "lead them on" or try to create "heart bonds". He tells this story in his book, *Dating With Integrity*. A thirteen- year- old friend of John's wanted to give a large candy heart to a girl in his class named Wendy for Valentine's Day. John asked him if he would give a heart like that to anyone else in his class. He said no, he

couldn't afford to do that. John said," Then giving Wendy a candy heart will kind of put her in a special category won't it?" John and Jeff discussed how Jeff could show more equal concern for all the members of his class. They came up with the idea of having him give chocolate kisses to everyone. When John later told this story to a friend, his friend criticized John's advice. He felt that Jeff should have shown special concern for Wendy because he had feelings for her. John disagreed. The fact that you have a romantic interest in someone doesn't mean that you've committed yourself to them. By showing special regard for someone of the opposite sex, you are implying that you are willing to be obligated to them. You are leading them to believe you wish to pursue a romantic relationship with them. (2) I will do nothing with members of the opposite sex, now, while we are unmarried, that we cannot continue to do in good conscience later, after one or the other of us has married someone else. How courtship works. Today's version of courtship is a reformed version of dating under the supervision of parents between a man and a woman who are ready to marry in the near future. If we compare dating to "window shopping," then courtship is shopping with cash in hand under the direction of experienced buyers. Let me give you an example of how this works. Suppose a person has reached the age where he or she feels they are ready for marriage, -- financially, emotionally, and spiritually. The son/daughter has identified a person that he or she is interested in deepening a relationship with. The s/d asks his/her parents and some other trusted Christian friends or family to pray with them about the issue. Since the Bible defines the man as the spiritual leader in marriage (Ephesians 5:23-25), I believe the man should initiate the courtship. The man could say something like this to the girl. "We're growing closer in friendship and I want to be up front about my motives. With your parents' permission, I want to pursue the possibility of marriage. I'm ready to be tested by you and your family." Next, the man informs the girl's parents of his desire and asks permission to court his daughter. Then the man spends time with the family, becoming a family friend. During the courtship period, there is no physical intimacy. Reason: This tends to encourage the formation of heart bonds and emotional defrauding. One of the advantages of "family courtship" is that the prospective spouse can be observed in real-life every day situations and valuable input can be obtained from the other family members. "Because the goal in a courtship relationship is not to achieve emotional and physical intimacy, the couple can terminate a relationship without leaving a piece of their heart behind. Courtship need only be as long as it takes to get to know a person and determine if he or she has certain characteristics." [J. Harris] Read excerpts of Andy and Betsy Barth's courtship story from The Teaching Home (attached).(Biblical precedent for courtship: Isaac and Rebekah,Ge.24;Jacob and Rachel,Gen29; Ruth and Boaz. Ruth 3; Joseph and Mary, Matthew 1.) It is best to start talking to your children about courtship before they reach the dating age. If they have

no expectations of dating, then there will be less disappointment when they are not allowed to date.

How to institute courtship if your teen is already dating. If you are convicted that dating is not Biblical and that it is not God's will for your child, then you have a responsibility as a parent to hold your child accountable to what God has revealed as His will. "To him who knows to do good and does not do it, it is sin."(James 4:17). First, explain to your child in a loving way why you have these convictions. It would probably be helpful to have your child read books and listen to some tapes on courtship. Also, apologize to your child for failing to properly train him in what the Bible teaches about male/female relationships. Apologize for allowing him to date in the past and for not protecting him from temptation. Pray with and for your child for strength to follow God's leading. If your child exhibits rebellion over this issue, then you need to seek Biblical wisdom for dealing with the sin of rebellion to parents.

How to answer the objection "But dating prepares them for marriage. It allows them to shop around and make sure they are marrying the right person" Here is a quote from The Charlotte Observer in an article about Joshua Harris. "Psychologist and marriage therapist Shirley Glass of Owings Mills, Md., says dating can give two people a chance to practice the business of being in a relationship. 'It's a learner's permit for a long-term relationship,' says Glass. 'You get feedback from another person about how to make a relationship work so that, hopefully, you go into marriage less starry-eyed and with more of a sense of reality.'" I would argue that dating is not the best way to learn about relationships, especially since the "physical" tends to become the focus in so many dating relationships. You can learn about relationships from your interactions with your own family, and by brother-sister relationships with other Christians. The Bible teaches you all you need to know about how to make a relationship work. Some Christian teachers believe that dating is actually a training ground for divorce, because when one partner loses interest they just break up with the other person. Dating creates an appetite for variety and change which can cause discontentment in marriage.[Bradley] In many cases, as soon as that "falling in love" thrill wears off, then the person moves on to someone else so that he can feel that thrill again. It can also cause comparisons between previous boyfriends/girlfriends and spouse. Some studies show that there is an 80% higher incidence of divorce in couples that lived together before marriage.

Let me share with you my vision for my children. I pray that when they go to the altar to marry, that the person they are marrying will be one that the family is convinced God has led them to marry. I want them to be able to approach the altar pure and chaste in the eyes of God with no memories of past physical intimacies with other people. I want them to be able to approach marriage with

no scars on their hearts from broken intimate relationships. I want them to be able to stand before God unashamed of their behavior while they were teenagers.

Scriptures relating to Courtship:

Matthew 5

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

1 Corinthians 7

Galatians 5:13

Philippians 1:9-10

Philippians 2:3-4

Colossians 3:5

1 Timothy 5:1-2

2 Timothy 2:22

James 1: 14-15

James 4:17 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

Abortion in the Bible

As surprising as it may be to some Theologians, the unequivocal answer is, Absolutely! The Biblical mandate against abortion is as old as the law of God itself, and is not subject to man's abrogation, rationalizations, or willful redefining. Man may try and justify abortion in his own mind, but he cannot by smooth words of nullification make what is transgression, righteous. The law of God states simply and quite unambiguously,

Exodus 20:13

- "Thou shalt not murder."

Of course I understand that some who call themselves Christians make the claim that since not all believe that abortion is murder, that then makes this law against murder an "unclear statement" as it relates to the act of abortion. But using that logic, we would have to also conclude that since not all who call themselves

Christians think homosexuality is the sin described in scripture, that makes the law against men being with men with women, an unclear statement as it relates to Homosexuality. i.e., does it make the Biblical statements against something unclear because scripture doesn't use the exact wording which man has devised to cloak it? The answer is no, it means man rationalizes God's laws away for his own purposes. Again, not all who call themselves Christians think that the commands to not marry a divorced person is really applicable today. So does that then mean that the Biblical mandates against this practice is unclear because these people choose to think this? The answer of course is no! There is no question about the Biblical statements, and simply because many individuals choose not to receive them or to rationalize them away, doesn't mean that the statements are unclear. What it means is that man in his abstinent heart, can in his own mind justify anything that he wishes in order to do whatever is right in his own eyes. And man has been doing this since the beginning.

A cornerstone of Christian Theology is that Jesus is God, and it's clearly stated in scripture time and again. Yet there is a myriad of people "calling themselves Christian" who will tell you it's not true at all and there is nothing in scripture which illustrates that. As a rule, no amount of scripture that you give them supporting this truth will convince them otherwise. Does that then mean they are correct, and that the scriptures don't teach that Jesus is God?

What we need to understand is this. When you have a mind set not to believe something, you will inevitably believe what is right in your own eyes, despite the evidence at hand. And that's what is happening with Abortion. People, indoctrinated by society and influenced by it's media, have gotten it into their mind that abortion is a necessary evil that should be allowed (due in no small matter to the constant propaganda on TV), and so they begin to superimpose what has by indoctrination become their own thinking, and their own will, upon the Holy scriptures. They take what they think is right in their own eyes, and they look for ways to rationalize it in scripture. They take the clear, and they attempt by subtlety and smooth words to make it unclear. They take what is right, and they rationalize it as a bad thing. They take what is wrong, and they rationalize it as a good thing. but this is nothing more than taking God's Word and twisting it conform to their own thoughts. Taking what is hot and cold, they make it lukewarm that they may eat and drink of the forbidden without conscience.

One Theologian told me, **"YOU define abortion as sin. But where does the Bible make such a definition of abortion?"**

Of course his premise being, the word "abortion" is not in the scriptures, therefore we can't say it's murder. But that is a ridiculous claim, especially for a man of Theology. For if that was what is required, 90 percent of sins wouldn't be

sins. But this word is not required to be in scripture because it's part modern man's humanistic philosophy of playing "word games". Years ago, no one even heard of the word abortion, much less have it written in scripture. Does that then make it not a sin? Just as there is no scripture which defines embezzlement as a sin, but does that mean that the Bible doesn't "clearly" speak to the issue? No! Because embezzlement is just a "10 cent word" used by modern man which means stealing. It's not required to be written in scripture. In this same way, Abortion is just a 10 cent word meaning Murder. The definition of Abortion is the taking of a human life before it can come out of it's mother's womb. It's called murder! And no attempt by man to hide the dastardly deed behind words like fetus changes the definition. These words may temporarily soothe the conscience of the murderer, but they never wash away the sin.

These word games are nothing new. Annulment is a 10 cent word meaning Divorce, Perjury is a 10 cent word meaning Lying, an affair is just a 10 cent word meaning fornication, Escargot is a 10 cent word meaning snails, and so on, and so forth. Christians better than anyone should understand that these words are designed to **lessen** the impact of the words which they replace. e.g., it's sounds much better to man to say, "we had an affair", than to say, "we went out and fornicated or committed adultery". Especially when the object is to distance ourselves from the word. So it's true, we're not going to find the word abortion in scripture, because it's murder. Murder is sin, Adultery is sin, Divorce is sin, Stealing is sin! These are the words God inspired to be used, not the 10 cent watered down variety, but words which show the severity of sin. Calling murder, abortion, doesn't free one from the judgment of God anymore than calling stealing, embezzlement, frees one from the law against stealing. Every word man dreams up to cloak sin doesn't have to be spelled out in scripture for the action to be a sin. There is no place deep enough to hide sin from God! For the Light will reveal it! If we confess our sins to God, He is merciful to forgive them. If we cloak them and use 10 cent words to pretend that they are no sin, then we shall be judged!

Ephesians 5:10-14

- "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.
- And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.
- For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.
- But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.
- Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light".

If the Spirit of God doesn't tell man these things, how can we presume to? God says the works of the flesh are self evident, or manifest. That's the unadulterated truth! It's just that man likes to deceive himself about them so he can live with himself without his conscience berating him. But there is no way that these words will hide him from God, who looks upon the heart and knows every nook and cranny filled with rationalizations. God knows the intents of the heart, no matter what the mouth says.

Unfortunately in some Theological circles, there is the opinion by some that there is "room for disagreement!" In other words, the "reason" that we might think abortion is murder, but we should allow for others to feel otherwise without saying they're wrong. But Frankly, that is like saying, I believe it's murder, but you go ahead because you don't believe it! I have never understood this (so called) logic. It's not acceptable to kill a baby while it's lying within the mother's womb, and it is not acceptable to kill a baby once it has been set free of that environment. And, **No**, there is no room for disagreement among Christians, for in Christianity it is never acceptable to murder the pre-born Child as long as it's in the womb! And they can find any nice way to say it that their heart desires, but simply because someone says it, doesn't make it so. If we believe it's truly murder, then there is obviously no room for compromise! That whole philosophy is warped!

Those who believe that taking a human life within the womb is not murder, do not by their humanistic reasoning preclude that action from the penalty of the law of God. It's still murder of a human life whether we call it abortion, a tennis game, or a box of crackers. You can call it what you want!

"A sewer by any other name, would smell as bad"

The transgression of abortion is self evident. man inherently knows what is right and wrong, and whether people want to admit it to themselves honestly or not, is insignificant to the truth of it.

Galatians 5:19-21

- "now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
- idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
- envyings, murders, drunkenness, revilings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."

God says these things are not ambiguous or unclear, they are made manifest or made known to us that they are works of the flesh. In other words, they are self evident! And murder is included there. We can deceive ourselves and say that abortion as murder is not self evident, till the cows come home, but God who trieth the Hearts knows better.

I submit to all an example God uses to illustrate just this principle about the things of God being "clearly" seen, and "if" there can be any excuse to make the claim that it wasn't clearly seen, or evil wasn't clearly known to man, and thus he escape judgment.

...And He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!

Romans 1:18

- "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against ALL unGodliness and unrighteousness of men, **who hold the truth in unrighteousness.**
- Because that which may be known of God is made known in them; for God hath **showed** it unto them.
- For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world **are clearly seen**, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal Power and Godhead; So that they are **Without Excuse!**"

Man instinctively knows the truth when he hears it, he knows that taking the life in a womb is murder, because God has showed it to them inherently. Will people be able to come before God and say, "Gee, it wasn't clearly shown that there was a God I should serve, or that we shouldn't lie, or that divorce was wrong, or I shouldn't abort babies, or practice fornicate, etc., etc. ..No! God says these things are Clearly Seen!" It doesn't matter if we in our rationalizations claim abortion isn't clearly seen as evil. Those who hold the truth in unrighteousness will be judged (except they repent), and God says they have "No Excuse!" For God who knows the heart, and can discern the difference between Soul and Spirit, can surely discern our rationalizations. Rationalizations may deceive us, but they do not deceive God!

The works of the flesh are made manifest to us all, and particularly to Christians, because we have the Spirit of Truth dwelling within us, and we know what is sinful because of our relationship with God.

Unfortunately, there is nothing any of us can say that will convince someone who has already made their mind up. But anyone who can look upon an aborted

baby, and "honestly" claim that this was not Life, can likewise look upon a tree and claim that it isn't wood. That's how foolish it really is. And if it is Life, then abortion is the murder of that life! Which of course is the very reason why they claim it's not (or rationalize that even if it is, it's not murder). Though in this article I have used my own clumsy words, God's Word is replete with the pertinent scriptures about life in the womb.

[v22- Note that Esau and Jacob are called children when in the womb. Not a fetus and not non-living appendages.]

Genesis 25:22-24

- "And the **children** struggled together within her;
- And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, And two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels:
- And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb."

Note again, God makes it clear that there were twin individuals in the womb. Two individual babies in her womb, not two pieces of meat, nor two lifeless blobs. There were two human creations of God there. Just as in the book of Luke, John is defined as a person in the womb. Unlike man, God is clear on what is growing inside a woman.

Luke 1:15

- "and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."

For Theologians to say that he was not yet a Child of God would be ludicrous! And if he was, then it cries out murderer to those who would give license for man to abort Children. And in verse 44 the child in Elizabeth's womb jumps for joy at the mere salutation of Mary - and God's promise is shown as fulfilled.

Luke 1:41-44

- "And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, **the babe leaped in her womb;** and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:
- And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.
- And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
- For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, **the babe leaped in my womb for joy**".

The baby leaped in her womb, not the piece of flesh not alive, and which can be righteously cut out if we so choose. A baby in the Womb! It was a baby, even before it came forth from the Womb. Not a fetus, an unborn baby.

Many theologians try and rationalize abortion by saying, "after 3 months or 4 months or more it's unacceptable to abort, but before that time it is. This is hypocrisy of the highest order, and nothing more than playing God to decide **when** life begins. e.g., Tuesday it's 4 months and 29 days and not a baby, but Wednesday, it is 5 months, and so **it's now a baby?** Who's to determine when it's a baby? The answer is, God! and He has...

Job 31:15

- "Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not One fashion us in the womb?"

Our Lord takes full responsibility for making one in the womb. Who made John in Elizabeth's womb? Zechariah or God? It was God who made him in the womb, that is the miracle of life. **Isaiah 44:24**

- "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the Womb I am the Lord, that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by Myself;

Ecclesiastes 11:5

- "And thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones grow in the womb of her that is **with child**, even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.

How well God has said it. It's not a woman with lifeless flesh in the womb, or with fetus which she can destroy at will, it's a mother with Child which God has formed in the womb. ..that is to say, "according to God it is!" Sad that in our day man thinks that he is in charge, he sits in the Holy temple to rule and makes everything. He understands not that ultimately God is in charge, He is on the throne, and it is He who hath created the Child in the womb. It is wanton rebellion against God to murder it. But man wants to play God and rule, but though he may use every rationalization known to him, God is not mocked. For He knows man from the inside out. He knows his heart is full of murders. And He knows man wants to serve and worship a god in his own image, (a idol) not the God of the Holy Bible. Man is kidding himself! God is in control even while man knows it not.

Psalms 139:13

- "For thou hast possessed my reins; thou hast covered me **in my mother's womb.**

Psalms 22:10

- "I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God **from my mother's belly.**

Other Verses to consider are: Ruth 1:11; Judges 13:5,7; Job 1:21, 3:11, 10:11, 24:20, 31:18, Psalms 22:9, 58:3, 71:6, Isaiah 13:18, 43:7, 44:2, 46:3, 48:8, 49:1, 5, 15, 66:9

And one of my favourites,

Jeremiah 1:5

- "Before **I** formed thee in the belly **I knew** thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb **I** sanctified thee, and **I** ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

God takes full responsibility for both forming the baby in the womb and in sanctifying it in the womb. These Christian people would dare to murder what God has before both formed and sanctified in a mother's belly? What a terrible thought. God's laws are that man must not shed man's blood in killing. And if it's wrong for us to shed men's blood in killing, then it's also wrong to shed a baby's blood in killing him. And If it is wrong to kill an child anytime after they break forth, it is also wrong to kill him anytime before he breaks forth. It's the only Biblical, logical and rational view for Christians. Because "understand" birth only changes the baby's living conditions and its manner of eating and collecting oxygen. To shed his blood before birth is just as much a sin against God as shedding it after birth.

Leviticus 17:14

- "for it is the Life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whoso eateth it shall be cut off."

A baby in its' mothers womb has the blood of Life. It is a living human being. When an abortion is performed, that life blood is shed, and that baby dies. What a vain and self absorbed mind set one must have to do such a horrific thing.

The rationalization of abortion by those calling themselves Christians is absolutely astounding to me given all the obvious facts! Where is their Spirit of truth that is supposed to be dwelling within every believer? This is a very good question! Their may be reason to fear because of that question.

We have learned to expect this sort of behaviour from Atheists and agnostics, but Christians should know better of the Spirit! But again, these are the times in which we live, where anything and everything is rationalized by much of the church. Murder, Reprisals, Divorce, Remarriage, Homosexuality, fornication, Women Pastors, Wrestling or ignoring the scriptures, Reviling the faithful, Changing Times and Laws, etc. The Love for God and His Holy Word has grown cold. Signs of the Times! We shouldn't expect to be complimented on a stand against abortion. On the contrary, we should expect to be vilified, even by some of the Church. Expect to be reviled, frowned upon, called a dinosaur, unloving, uncaring, ignorant and uneducated. But we must stand fast in the faith. For God is not mocked by unrighteousness "masquerading "as compassion. The bible is clear on the subject of abortion. ..It is the murder of a baby in the womb. It is the Killing of a child within it's mother.

Here's a question to ask anyone who is rationalizing abortion. Because it tends to throw their rationalization all out of kilter, and brings it right home where we live! The question is,

"if there could be the abortion of John the Baptist, Elijah, the twelve apostles, any of the prophets of old, would their mothers be in terrible sin for aborting these Children in their womb, or did they have the right in freedom of choice, to do this thing without sin?"

If it is acceptable for Christians today, it was acceptable for them to do then if they so chose. Read again Ecclesiastes 11:5. Would these Mothers be guiltless if they aborted (murdered) these Children before they were delivered from the womb? Will these people be consistent and tell you it was these mothers "right" to choose and decide to abort John the Baptist, Peter, Paul, even Jesus Himself, or choose not to abort these Children in their Wombs? Frankly, It's another self evident Abominable (as well as Ludicrous) idea! They had **no right** to choose to abort these babies. Man need to consider wisely exactly the implications of his thoughts.... And if it is not their "right to choose," then likewise, no one can righteously do this today! And if they do, the Judgment will be the same as if Elizabeth had murdered John the Baptist in the womb! For there is no difference.

Is Abortion Really So Bad?

In the year 1985, 1.58 million abortions were performed in hospitals and various clinics across the United States and more than 62,000 unborn children were put to death across Canada. Approximately 30% of all known pregnancies end in abortion. If we consider that Canada lost 40,000 men and United States surrendered 4 million lives during World War 11, we begin to realize how many lives are being taken by human hands in our countries. *Three times as many unborn children have lost their lives in one year in our countries than our countries have lost soldiers in the Second World War.*

When we reflect back with grief upon the lives lost during World War 11, how much more we should contemplate this present day issue of abortion. We certainly should have a strong rational, ethical, and moral basis to permit this many lives to be ended by human hands each year.

Let us examine the arguments used by those who promote abortion to determine on how strong of a foundation this practice is based.

Argument 1:

The fetus (unborn child) is not really human, therefore it can be killed.

Those who hold this viewpoint will agree that at some point the child growing in the womb of the mother becomes a human being. Some set this time at the sixth week of pregnancy, some at three months, some at felt signs of life by the mother, and some at birth. Hospitals, clinics, and state or provincial rules concerning the maximum development stage at which to allow abortion vary with these various opinions. When we consider some medical facts, as the following, it would appear very difficult to speak definitely of a time in which the fetus is not human.

- At 3 weeks after conception a baby's heart begins beating.
- At 6 weeks after conception a baby's brain waves are traceable.
- At 11 weeks after conception all of the baby's internal organs are present and functioning.

If there is a time after conception in which the living and growing unborn child is not human. who and what is it then? If we search biological classifications of living organisms, how would we classify this living and growing fetus if it were not a human being? If this matter of determining when the unborn child is a human being is so unclear, how do we dare to say that abortion is permissible, and not murder?

Argument 2:

The fetus requires a host body and therefore cannot be considered fully human because it is dependent on another.

Those who uphold this argument of independent viability tread on very dangerous territory. If this is true that an individual is less human because he is dependent upon another person or object, we could argue from this principle that the newborn, the physically and mentally handicapped, the senile, kidney-machine dependent, etc. are all less human because they are directly dependent on others and therefore we may dispose of them at random. If it is murder for a mother to kill her newborn child which is entirely dependent upon her (consider especially an infant born prematurely), why is it not murder for her to kill her child before it is born?

Argument 3:

A woman has a right to do with her body as she desires.

Even if this argument were entirely true (which it is not), this would not give her the right to do with another person's body as she would desire. Abortion involves the death of a separate body, her unborn child's. To argue that the living fetus is part of the mother's body defies reason: which organ of her body is it? When the unborn child's heart beats, whose heart is it? When the fetus's brain waves can be traced, whose brain is it? To willfully end the life of another for one's own convenience has always been viewed as murder.

Argument 4:

If abortion upon demand is declared illegal again, women will have abortions anyway by travelling to other countries or through illegal and unsafe back-street abortionists.

The fact that other areas of the world practice things which we forbid, or that items can be purchased illegally which are out-lawed, is not a proper basis for law-making. Our laws must be based on sound principles; if abortion is the taking of the life of another, it must be forbidden by law. Further, all evidence gathered to date seems to indicate that the back-street abortionists are as active today as they were some years ago before abortion upon demand was practiced.

Argument 5:

Death before birth is better for the "unwanted" child, than living a life of "unwantedness".

To give a human being decisional powers to determine if another individual is "wanted" or "unwanted" is most dangerous. The implications of this viewpoint are staggering. once human life is devalued to a level of human decision concerning its worthiness or "wantedness," the horrors of Nazi-defined worthless or "unwanted" human beings are again brought into the field of human consideration. Would some not place the mentally retarded, invalids, senile, etc. in this same category? Besides, do not many "unwanted" pregnancies result in "wanted" children after birth? Do not many "unwanted" children overcome severe social handicaps in their youth and function as useful adult citizens? Are not adoption agencies continually short of infants for parents who want "unwanted" children?

In critically examining the five basic arguments for abortion upon demand, can we honestly conclude on a rational, ethical, and moral basis that abortion should be legal? When we consider that more than 98% of all abortions in the past year were for personal convenience reasons and that less than 2% were for rape, incest, protection of the life of the mother, and defective fetuses, must this not heighten our concern? In a country based on the guaranteeing of certain individual rights to its citizens of which the right to life is a most basic principle, are we not digressing to authorize "murder-upon-demand" today.?

It is amazing that often those stressing the need to stop abortion are accused of trying to force their beliefs on others. in reality, all who participate in an abortion force their views on another, viz., on the unborn child - so strongly in fact, that it results in his or her death. If the unborn child is a human being when examined rationally, ethically, and morally, how can one be accused of trying to force his own belief on another when trying to protect the life of the child from his or her murderer? if a mother abused her six-month-old child so severely that the child died and we demand this practice be stopped because it harms and results in the loss of another's life, would we be accused of forcing our beliefs on others? This type of shallow accusation misses the entire argument. if the unborn child is a human being-then abortion is murder! If abortion is murder we must do all in our power to stop it.

The liberalization of interpretation of laws concerning abortion today by many courts, legislatures, doctors, and hospital boards has resulted in the large number of abortions we are presently witnessing. Indeed, it has subjected our society to some strong paradoxes, such as:

- Today a woman crossing the street in front of a hospital, which she plans to enter to have an abortion, could be hit by a car and lose her baby. if the driver of the car was at fault she could legally sue the driver for the loss of her child's life. Yet the same woman could also proceed into the hospital

without an accident, and legally have her child's life taken away through abortion.

- Today more unborn children and infants die from abortion than from any other form of accidents or diseases. The most dangerous place for a developing child today is in his or her mother's womb.
- Today many legislators are fighting to outlaw all forms of capital punishment, even for the worst of criminal offenders, because this is viewed as cruel and unusual punishment. Yet, many of the same individuals can vote to approve the killing of thousands of innocent, unborn children.

So far we have concentrated on defeating the pro-abortionists' "best" arguments on their own grounds of rational, ethical, and moral reasoning, via a *negative* approach. We have left basically untouched the innumerable serious side-consequences of abortion: the screams of the unborn (see Dr. Gilson's book, *Alarm -A World in Danger*); the cutting, slicing, burning, poisoning, or bleeding accompanying approved murder (see Dr. Koop's book, *The Right to Live*, particularly the section on the techniques of abortion); the tragic burial of the unborn in trash cans and ash incinerators (see Ed Melton's article in *Temple Times*); the post-abortion anxiety, depression, sense of loss, anger, remorse, nightmares, infertility, and flashbacks of murdering mothers who yield to the increasingly acceptable option and social fashion of modern abortifacient. (See a remarkable study in Milwaukee of 95 post-abortion women which reveals the variety of types of distress experienced, pp. 57-58 of Dr. Koops' book,)

But we must turn to a higher court of authority than human reasoning and human consequences. We are called to the even more important task of setting forth *positively* the truths and proclamations of God's Word which are directly and/or indirectly involved in the issue of abortion. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them" (Is. 8:20). Ultimately, the issue of abortion can and must be settled only in the pages of *Holy Writ* - not by court proclamations of Bible-denying judges.

Proclamation 1:

God's Word clearly treats personhood (soul and body) as commencing at conception.

God's Word never treats the soul as being created in the womb at some point after conception. Rather, in Psalm 51:5 David tells us: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." How can an unborn child, while yet in the womb, possess a sinful nature which separates him from God, and yet possess no soul? Can anything be shapen in iniquity while remaining

soul-less? David confesses his united soul-body creation even more plainly in Psalm 139: 13-16,

"For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise Thee; for I (soul and body) am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."

Further, in Gen. 9:4 we read, "the life thereof which is the blood thereof " This phrase is the basis for many other passages of Scripture which equate blood with life, and call the shedding of blood sin (Jer. 22:3; Ps. 106:37-38; Dt. 19:10,13; 21:9; 11 Ki. 24:4; Prov 6:16-17, etc.). in other words, since every fetus has its own blood, the shedding of that blood is as surely the taking of life (soul and body) as it would be in any other circumstance or situation.

Proclamation 2:

The Word of God forbids murder - by abortion or any other means - because God created man in His own image.

Sacred biblical truth proclaims to us unceasingly that God is the Author and Giver of human life, and therefore no creature has a right to intentionally dispose of, nor destroy such a complex Divine creation. In Gen. 9:6 we read, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: *for* in the image of God made He man." Though we have lost the image of God in its narrower sense entirely through our deep fall in Adam, wider remnants of God's image still cling to us after the fall - including our very soul-body personhood. In spite of our fall, we still receive our life from God in a special manner. In a peculiar manner we receive the breath or life of our souls directly from God (Gen. 2:7), making us more than plants or animals. Job confessed, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."

Contrary to Scripture, abortionists principally and inevitably *reject the sacredness and value of life, treat God's complex creation as nothing more than a growing cell, and deny that the life of a human being is created for a never-ending eternity.* At minimum, abortion reduces man to an animalistic level, ignoring the very mark of true personhood - his never-dying soul.

Proclamation 3:

God's Word teaches us that Divine sovereignty excludes all abortions - even in such cases as rape, incest, or possible retardation.

God's sovereignty must be brought to the fore in all areas of life - also in current areas of debate, such as abortion. Abortion treads into Divine territory by taking into the hands of man that which belongs to the sovereign Jehovah alone. "The Lord killeth and maketh alive" (I Sam. 2:6). Humanistic abortionists think it cruel to cut off all abortions entirely, especially in cases of rape, possible handicaps or retardation, and incest. Their cruelty charge, however, falls back on themselves.

With respect to rape, studies reveal that it seldom results in pregnancy. A study in Minneapolis of 3,500 consecutive rapes revealed not a single pregnancy. Besides, will abortion of the innocent product of a rape return the mother to an unviolated, unassaulted state? Will abortion apprehend the rapist? Will abortion restore the mother to her pre-raped state of peace of mind? In a sense, abortion of the unborn baby produced by rape is just as violent an act as the rape itself. Instead of adding crime to crime, how much better would it not be for such a woman to confess to the Lord, "I know that what has taken place is within the realm of Thy providence and sovereignty. Give me grace to bow under Thy ways." Such grace would bring peace of mind far more richly than all the abortion clinics in the world could give.

Each person formed in the womb of his mother lies in the decree of God - blind, maimed, retarded, and deformed as equally as those born with health. Also in this respect the Lord's ways are above our ways. On the one hand, such a child is often not only loved by its parents equally with the others, but the Lord may also be pleased to teach valuable lessons through such trials. Dr. Koop writes:

"My professional life has been spent largely with children who are less than one would consider totally normal... In the thousands of such circumstances in which I have participated, I have never had a parent ask me why I tried so hard to save the life of their defective child. Nor has any parent ever expressed to me the wish that his child had not been saved."

On the other hand, doctors are often wrong in predicting handicaps at birth. A British medical journal recently included this contribution:

"One way of catching class attention is to ask what advice students would give when presented with the following family history. The father has syphilis, the mother tuberculosis; they have already had four children-the first is blind, the second died, the third is deaf and dumb, and the fourth has tuberculosis. The

mother is pregnant with her fifth child, and the parents are willing to have an abortion should you so decide ... After the majority of the class express their favor of abortion, you tell them they have just murdered Beethoven."

God's sovereignty stands above everything - even of children conceived in incest (Ex. 6:20).

God is free to do with all His creatures as it pleases Him, but we need grace to bow *before* Him, *under* Him, and in *with* Him. Jeremiah, Isaiah, and John the Baptist were converted already in the womb before many today would judge that they even had a soul, and we read in Romans 9:

"When Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac, (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth:) it was said unto her. The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (vv. 10, 1,3).

Proclamation 4

According to God's Word, Divine justice shall rest heavily on the nation or people who persevere in such murderous tragedies as abortion.

In Exodus 21:22-23 we read:

"If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life."

If God's commanded penalty for a case of *accidental* abortion is so severe, shall He stand idly by while murderous abortionists *deliberately* shed blood? Must we not cry out, "Woe unto thee, North America. For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes"? Yes, abortion is truly bad. *Abortion is nothing less than the premeditated, calculated, legalized murder of nameless, voiceless, helpless human beings created by God* It is said of the ancients that they sacrificed their infants unto the god Moloch. it may one day be written that the pagans of 20th century America sacrificed their infants - their *unborn* sons and daughters - to the gods of Selfishness, Materialism, Irresponsibility, and Humanism, via abortion. Abortion, together with a host of sexually permissive sins, surely makes our land to be a stench in the nostrils of God.

The Judge stands before the door. He will not be mocked. His patience will not endure forever. Senator Jesse Helms wrote: "Unless the abortion decision is reversed by an amendment to the Constitution, the future of America is in grave doubt, for no nation can remain free or exercise moral leadership when it has embraced the doctrine of death."

The blood of countless millions cries to God. It is on all of our hands, *for we are all guilty*. Who is there among us that trembles at the Word of God - who trembles at the thought that what the Lord said to Cain, "The voice of Thy brother's blood crieth to Me from the ground," brings in its wake the awesome burden of the voiceless millions in our land whose blood is being shed hourly?

May the Lord humble us. He only knows how far the evil of abortion has penetrated the domain of the church of God. It is an evil that eats as a canker because the truth has very little impression on the conscience of man any more. only the fear of God can keep us from sin. May the Lord convince us of our deep guilt, personally and nationally. God forbid that He find us unconcerned, silent, or lukewarm over such blatant iniquity as abortion. Let us seek grace to strive together against this outright breach of the 6th commandment.

What tasks are we then called to?

1. **Prayer.** Ask the Lord to grant true prayer for our countries, its leaders, the medical profession, and others involved.
2. **Education.** Obtain information on abortion, and seek ways to fight effectively against it.
3. **Support.** Give financial or membership support to conservative anti-abortion groups such as Right To Life, Pro-Life, etc.
4. **Legislation.** As citizens of the United States and Canada, write your appropriate elected government officials on a local and national level, to inform them of your opposition to abortion.



The Bible Against Euthanasia

Because public debate about the “right to die” is always prompted by undeniably tragic high-profile cases, those of us who oppose euthanasia are usually on the back foot. We let those who favour the legalisation of euthanasia frame the discussion in terms that are very favourable to their position – terms that avoid the reality of an environment in which the deliberate ending of life is part of the medical apparatus.

The debate about euthanasia isn’t about “letting people die.” It’s about doctors actively taking part in killing them. To ask if euthanasia should be legalised is therefore not merely to ask whether an in-principle ‘right to die’ exists in moral terms. Proponents of euthanasia are also asking the state to take part, through its laws and its representatives, in the actual act of terminating life.

The state and society are therefore entitled to a moral stance, and to weigh up the importance of those things that undoubtedly support the case for euthanasia – such as human dignity and relief from suffering – against the importance of preserving life and the clarity of a “bright line” rule on this most fundamental issue.

In order to protect all of us, I believe that the state must say that whilst there is a right to life, there is no right to death. People die. But the state shouldn’t kill them. In a euthanasia society, the state is asked to make decisions about whose

life should continue, and whose should not – to draw up criteria, perhaps. As said by the House of Lords: directly or indirectly, the state should never say – should never be *able* to say – that a person’s life is not worth living:

"The message which society sends to vulnerable and disadvantaged people should not, however obliquely, encourage them to seek death, and instead, should assure them of our care and support in life."

Great dangers might follow any relaxation of the strict rule against medical killing; changing the law encourages more change. Pro-euthanasia campaigners argue that an absurd contradiction exists under the status quo: individuals able to reach for the pill bottle and swallow can engineer their “exit,” but those who are not able to, cannot: the current law, they say, penalises those who are most impeded. Ensuring that the latter can die at will as the former can is but a small change, they say. It equalises the positions of those whose situations are substantially the same but have radically different options due to an unfeeling law, they say.

In a euthanasia environment, with living wills in place as most campaigners recommend, another argument will be advanced along the same lines. The families of those who had the foresight to sign such a document can ensure their loved one’s undignified suffering in a coma can be ended, they’ll say, whilst the families of those who did not have such foresight cannot. It’s a small change to allow the latter the same freedom as the former, they’ll say. It equalises the positions of those whose situations are substantially the same but have radically different options due to an unfeeling law, they’ll say. And so we would move from a voluntary euthanasia environment to an involuntary euthanasia environment.

It’s for this reason that in February 1994, after lengthy investigation, the House of Lords Medical Select Committee (the membership of which included some previously pro-euthanasia Lords) held unanimously that euthanasia should not be considered in the UK: they stated that

“creating an exception to the general prohibition on intentional killing would open the way to further erosion, whether by design, by inadvertence or by the human tendency to test the limits of any regulation. These dangers are such that any decriminalisation of voluntary euthanasia would give rise to more, and more grave, problems than those it sought to address.”

This continues to be the Government’s position.

The Medical Profession

Certainty in medical practice is tremendously important. The aim of medicine is to help people get better – to preserve life, not end it. That's why people become doctors. At the heart of medicine lies a pledge called the Hippocratic Oath, which (whilst precise wording varies) says 'I will give no deadly medicine to anyone, even if asked, nor suggest any such course.' Euthanasia's proponents play down its importance, but it doesn't matter whether doctors actually stand up and swear this oath or not – our understanding of medicine is shaped by it. That fundamental contract between society and medicine would be broken by euthanasia.

It is true that doctors also have a duty to uphold the dignity of their patients. But the principle of medicine, its fundamental aim, is to heal. If it comes down to life versus dignity, life must win – because that way, doctors are violating the lesser duty, the lesser principle. If they're making a mistake, the mistake is lesser in preserving life than the potential mistakes involved in ending it to aid dignity.

On a different note, there's a reason the BMA recommends maintaining the current anti-euthanasia environment. In a euthanasia environment, as euthanasia cases become more and more common, some doctors who don't want to perform this procedure for whatever reason will be pressurised to do so. Their careers will suffer as a result. Furthermore, even doctors who are not among those directly concerned, who neither euthanize nor are asked to, are nevertheless affected: doctors have taken up their vocation specifically because of their desire to cure and preserve life. This changes the nature of their profession. It casts the confusion of healer or killer across whole of medicine.

Doctors of faith are put in a terrible position where euthanasia is legal. Even if they don't have to confront this directly, even if they're never asked, the profession they belong to is doing something they believe is profoundly wrong. Because it reflects on all doctors, once some doctors start killing their patients. It erodes doctor-patient trust, and fundamentally changes the doctor-patient relationship. Patients, especially the elderly, will ask with justification, "need I fear going to the doctor, for he may prescribe death?"

We are often told in response to this that 'doctors are doing this already' and that this change merely makes their actions safer for them and the patient. But are they? They shouldn't be. They're breaking the law, which they are bound to obey just like anyone else. They should be prosecuted. The fact that the law is broken is no justification for changing it. In truth, this is no argument in favour of euthanasia at all. Even if it's true that some doctors really are killing their

patients, and in doing are doing what they and all in the case concerned believe to be best, at least the state isn't currently implicated in that act.

The Impossibility of Certainty

Medicine is always improving. Cures are found, and better techniques are developed. Euthanasia stops the chance of benefiting from new developments and from unexpected improvements, because it ends the life that might have had that benefit.

Furthermore, all medical conditions ebb and flow. Medicine frequently sees remissions that are entirely unexpected. They sometimes come in patients told definitively, certainly, that they have no chance of surviving their condition.

No certainty exists in medicine, for these two reasons. But the voice of the 'expert' is one of great and misleading allure. Because of the rapidly changing nature of medicine, a doctor or team of doctors may wrongly say – with certainty – that a patient will die. But patients have a disproportionately high trust of doctors, because of the tremendous esteem in which the profession is held. In a euthanasia society, that certainty – where in truth things can never be certain – may lead to avoidable death by ill-informed "choice." The doctor or doctors might also simply have misdiagnosed, or be incompetent. Even if he has done neither, he may nevertheless be wrong.

"It will be the doctor's values and judgements about pain, disability and dependence that will determine what is recommended and what is done. Since those values will be randomly met, that would be profoundly unjust."

Pro-euthanasia advocates avoid this by shunting responsibility onto the patient, who ostensibly wants to choose death – if the individual wants it, they say, and we can guarantee that they are rational, who are we to deny them?

The truth is that even if the patient is held to be 'rational,' if his health is so bad as to warrant the consideration of euthanasia then his condition invariably precludes real judgment. You are asking people about their view of the future at the worst moment – at their very lowest point, the moment at which their condition is most severe. In Australia in 1996, during a brief period of legality in the Northern Territory, Dr Philip Nitschke was the first doctor in the world to give legal, voluntary euthanasia. After the law was changed, his supporters campaigned vigorously for a return to euthanasia. His poster patient June Burns made a tremendously powerful appeal, pleading for death on national TV in 1999, saying she'd rather kill herself than "die like a dog" from cancer. She went into remission a year later, and (whilst still pro-euthanasia) she is naturally

glad that she wasn't allowed to make that choice, at the moment she was at her worst.

The patient might still be rational, but he is rational in circumstances so extraordinary as to make his choice an impossibly ill-informed one. He's not making truly informed choices because medicine doesn't know with certainty everything that will happen to him in the future. The patient is rational – but he is making this decision only with information available to him, in the circumstance of most pain and suffering, when things look worst. He thinks that his options are binary – terrible pain, or death – when there may be palliative treatments and better treatments to alleviate suffering and facilitate a rewarding end to life even if death itself is inevitable. He makes a decision he won't live to regret.

It is uncertain as to whether there is a point at which there can be an informed and rational choice at all, even for those patients whose plight has been identified with what the medical world believes to be certainty. To stop pain, the patient is often on mind-bendingly powerful, drugs. His "consent" can't be considered valid in those circumstances. So the patient is taken off the drugs to be asked the choice. He's in tremendous amounts of pain, and in withdrawal from drugs which are often addictive, so unsurprisingly, when someone asks him if he wants the pain to stop, he says yes.

Supporters of euthanasia attempt to circumvent these problems by supporting "living wills." But quality of life is context specific. You or I might say I never want to be trapped in my body, unable to move. But we don't really know how we will actually feel in that situation. There are those alive today who communicate through the blinking of an eye, the movement of a finger, and say I want to live. I would not have thought that I would, but I do. I can enjoy seeing my family around me, my children grow up, my parents smile: this life has its rewards that more than compensate for what I would once have thought unbearable.

Pre-judgement of one's attitude of quality of life is totally irrelevant until you experience it, and no-one else can make that decision for you. To say "x condition is too horrible to endure" is to apply objective criteria to conditions that are utterly subjective.

Potential for abuse

All the oft-claimed checks might be in place for the first few high profile euthanasia cases, but in an environment in which euthanasia is an everyday occurrence, where euthanized death is not controversial but banal, the following may occur:

- Families may urge doctors to ‘let their loved ones go’ – nobody should ever be able to hold that sway over the lives of others, but in a euthanasia environment they do.
- Families that stand to gain from the death of the patient may bribe or collude with doctors to agree that this person should die.
- Doctors will face enormous pressure. The need for beds and for precious resources will be apparent. Society will effectively be asking doctors to make value judgements in a system with finite resources – whose life is worth living, whose is not? Presently, they don’t have ability to cut down one life to make space for another – or if they do, by breaking the law, they shouldn’t. Yes, abuse might happen now – but under which system is it more likely?

The point is that in determining public policy, one cannot rely on ideal cases, where all terminally ill patients are treated at the highest standards and all doctors are well informed and competent in terminal care.¹

Euthanasia offers “an easy way out” – which might be thought better than months of treatment. Said treatment is probably – no, certainly – in the best interests of the patient, who gets to live – but often not in best interests of the family, who don’t want to suffering and the inconvenience of having to watch.

In medicine at the moment, the interests of the patient are the key, no matter what others want. More than that – they are the *sole* determinant. In effect, euthanasia balances the interests of the patient against the interests of others. The dangers to the patient are obvious.

Euthanasia is sometimes presented as something the conservative should support: that it’s a facet of liberty, a question of control over one’s own body and what happens to it. Not so. In a euthanizing environment, if a healthy person, entitled to medical treatment, of sound mind, came to a doctor and said ‘help me die,’ the doctor wouldn’t. So euthanasia is not actually about the individual’s rights and control over their body. Bodily autonomy is a red herring in this debate.

Relief is obviously tremendously important: of course, people should not suffer unnecessarily. Palliative care is getting better and better. Social care at the bedside, anti-depression techniques, pain management – these are all improving and should be pursued with great effort. But we must not legalise euthanasia.



Young Roman Catholic priest desiring to proclaim the grandeur of the Vatican

Apologetics on Roman Catholicism

The Inventions of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the Ages

All that the Roman Catholic Church has taught throughout the Ages are certainly not divinely inspired. The Papacy alone, aided by the temporal power, imposed these “ideas”, to the clergy and the faithful, most of the time completely non-biblical. So:

- Were introduced in the year 120 by the Roman Church: the penances.
- In year 200 the institution of ordination established the priesthood.
- The papacy in the year 220 creates as means of grace to obtain salvation: indulgences.
- In the year 325, the Council of Nicaea accepts the dogma of the 'Holy Trinity' which was introduced by the Council of Constantinople.
- In the year 364 was the “Sunday” introduced, already celebrated by Emperor Constantine.
- In the year 378, Gratien, Emperor of the Western Roman Empire from 375. It prohibited the pagan worship in Rome and forbade the wear the insignia of 'Pontifex Maximus'. Damascus Christian bishop, used the title for himself (year 378).

- In the year 381, the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople meets to define the dogma of the "Holy Trinity". Nectarius was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople and assigned to occupy the second rank after Rome.
- The worship of relics was allowed in the year 397.
- In the year 431, Mary was recognised as the 'Mother of God'.
- In year 440, Leo I becomes Pope in Rome. He was the first to consider himself, as the "Vicar of Christ", by creating a new theocracy and decided to wear a tiara rather than a diadem, considering it as a symbol of universal sovereignty.
- In the 449 years, the authority of the Popes as superior to other bishops was recognised.
- In the year 476, Pope Felix III excommunicated the Patriarch of Constantinople. The crisis between the churches of East and West grew worse!
- In the year 595, Gregory the Great introduced in the Catholic Church, a new dogma: the purgatory.
- In the year 600, incense was admitted.
- In the year 815, the invocation of Mary and the Saints was elevated to ecclesiastical tradition.
- In the year 726, Emperor Leo III of Constantinople prohibits the worship of images and orders to destroy them all. The war of the iconoclasts began. Pope Gregory II in Rome excommunicated the Emperor.
- In the year 800, the Pope crowned Charlemagne, King of the Franks, as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire; and, in so doing not only places himself above every kingship (the sovereigns), but interferes even in political affairs. He totally ignored the existence of Empress Irene, who reigned in Constantinople.
- In the year 855, concerning the feminine Pope Joan (Jeanne), (known as John the Englishman), with two years reigning after the death of Pope Leo IV, no pope or clergyman had questioned her existence. The reformer John Huss referred to her at the Council of Constance in 1415, but nobody protested. All the bishops present believed in her existence. Only pope Pius II (1458-1464) first disputed the existence of Pope Joan. (True or fiction!)
- In the year 1000, the holy water made its appearance.
- In the year 1054, Pope Leo IX attempts to conquer the Eastern Church in Rome. He excommunicated the Patriarch of Constantinople Cerulius Michel. It is believed that this failure was the main cause in preaching the crusades preached against the pagans and the great schism.
- In the year 1074, the celibacy of the priests was decided.

- In the year 1200, the sacrament of extreme unction.
- In the year 1220, was introduced the worship of the host
- In the year 1311, it was decided that the tiara "crown of the Popes" will be without thorns but richly adorned with gold and diamonds.
- In the year 1349, Indulgences in 1349 began to be easily applied: Sobald des geld in der Kasse klinget, die Seele in den Himmel springt (Once the money in the fund sounds, the soul passes into heaven).
- In the year 1545, it was decreed that the traditions of the Catholic Church have the same value as the Holy Scriptures.
- In the year 1549, was instituted the feast of the dead by the Council of Trent.
- In the year 1854, the Catholic view of the "Immaculate Conception" becomes a dogma.
- In the year 1870, the pontifical infallibility also becomes a dogma.
- In the year 1950, the Papacy created the doctrine of Assumption, solemnity on August 15, or the next Sunday in some countries.
- And, this is not finished, as we all know too well.

Pur·ga·to·ry, pur'ga-tor'e, *n.* pl. pur·ga·to·ries. [*L. purgatorius.*] Roman Catholic Church Tradition; The doctrine that posits that there exists a state of purification, where the soul that has fully repented of its sins, but that has not fully expiated them, goes to have removed from itself the last elements of uncleanness. In purgatory, it is said that all who die guilty of venial sin, suffer punishment for sins not atoned for, and have all remaining love of self transformed into love of God. This doctrine states that, "At death one's soul goes to either heaven, if it is completely fit for heaven (as the saints); to purgatory, if it is not quite fit for heaven, but not worthy of condemnation; or to hell, if it is completely unfit for heaven." It is said to be a temporary state, and everyone who enters it will eventually get to heaven. After the last soul leaves purgatory for heaven, it will cease to exist, and there will remain only heaven and hell. --**pur·ga·to·ri·al**, pur"ga-tor-e-al, pur'ga-tar'e-al,

That, in a nutshell, is the general description of the doctrine of Purgatory. But is there a Purgatory? It is true that the Roman Catholic Church formulated this doctrine by an article of faith at the Council of Florence in 1439, and at the council of Trent. But is there really scriptural warrant for a place called Purgatory, and why would there need to be an official explanation of an alleged place that is never referenced in holy canon? It is inconceivable that the Holy Bible should inform us of Heaven and earth, propitiation and Hell, and yet leave out an important doctrine such as Purgatory or Limbo. Yet the Roman Catholic Church found the need to create an age that is not found anywhere in the Bible,

where they say Christians will be purged of their sins? Even when the Bible itself declares that Christians are presented perfect before God, this extrabiblical teaching is that there is some additional purging required. The existence of Purgatory is authoritatively taught, and generally believed among Roman Catholics. Yet it is a doctrine that has absolutely no Biblical validation, and that consistently contradicts God's holy word. Neither Christ, nor the Apostles ever taught that Christians must go to a place of purging to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of eternal heaven. Neither in the Old Testament, nor the New is there any such teaching documented. Indeed, it is found to be the product of Church humanism and an active imagination borne out of the fallacies of dubious books such as Maccabees, and other legends of men. Though it has become Roman Catholic dogma, it is self evident that in Christianity, no uninspired book or tradition of man can become an authority over God's word. Nor can God's word be made antithetical to itself by extrabiblical teachings of the Church. It is therefore beyond question that any teaching that does so, is spurious and of no authority over God's people. All doctrines of Biblical Christianity must come from the word of God, which are inspired in the sixty-six official inspired books of the universal Church.

In reality, the very nature of all and every teaching that is not the true gospel, inevitably is one that ends up rejecting God's word "alone" as the final authority over Church doctrine. In rejecting the Bible as the sole "ultimate" source of God's word today, man frees himself to add, subtract, or circumvent biblical truths by alleging oral traditions. Because if the word of God is not the divine final authority, then man can add other authorities with impunity. But when we reject the "*word of God alone*" as our final or ultimate rule of law, then by definition God alone is not our authority. We have forsaken trust in the Lord's word and have made man to rule in stead of God. Because when Church leaders decide to make up their own doctrines, based upon their own understanding (rather than God's word), they are failing to acknowledge His word of guidance, authority and supremacy.

Proverbs 3:5-6

- "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.
- In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Without the word of God as authority to direct us, we are leaning unto our own understanding. When man postulates that there is another way to atone for our sins, apart from what the word of God says was full atonement, then they have departed from the God of the Bible and become gods unto themselves. And let's not mince words here, the extrabiblical belief in Purgatory is based upon our purging sins therein. All false teachings have this same common denominator,

which is the fact that their "source" is not the written word of God alone, but the Bible plus some other additional authority over it. That additional authority could be a Holy man, the Church hierarchy, another book, or even divine revelations. By contrast, the true gospel of Christ is prescribed by the Christian's dependence upon the unadulterated, unassisted word of God alone as the ultimate authority for truth.

2nd Timothy 3:15-17

- "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
- All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:
- That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Clearly, the faithful man of God is made perfect and thoroughly furnished unto all good works by the divinely inspired Holy Scriptures. The scriptures are God's inspired instruction on how we are made righteous (sinless), how to hold fast to sound doctrines, and to correct us when we err. The sign of false Christianity is that it does not take correction from God's word, it will instead turn to the right hand and to the left, in order to avoid what it actually says.

Deuteronomy 5:32

- "Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left."

In unrighteousness, God's law is looked upon as something to get around, not something that must be observed and faithfully followed. And the way that they get around correction of the word is to feign other authorities that supercede God's word alone as the final arbiter and ultimate authority.

Proverbs 3:11-12

- "My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:
- For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."

God corrects those whom He loves by chastening them that they repent of their transgressions of the law. But the Church that will not repent nor turn away from unfaithfulness to the word, God will judge. Just as Old Testament Israel rejected the correction and instruction of scripture and God judged them. Those judgments they faced are the very same judgments that we will face if we turn aside from God's holy word concerning sin and how it must be purged.

Ezekiel 18:4

- "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

The penalty for man's sin is death. Nowhere does the word of God teach of purging sin in Purgatory. Obviously because it is blatantly antithetical the very nature of Christianity to claim sinners can get "purged" of their sins after death. In fact, to be perfectly honest it is blasphemous, and against all that God Himself teaches of the atonement for sin. The subject of the purging of all of man's sins is dealt with extensively in the word so that it shouldn't even be debatable how it "must" be purged!

Hebrews 9:22

- "And almost all things are by *by the law purged with Blood*; and without shedding of blood is no remission."

The law of God states that there is only one thing that can purge man from his sin, and that is the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Despite what Roman Catholicism teaches, there is absolutely nothing else that can take away any sin from man. It is actually pagan to think that man can be punished, and thusly be purged from sin. If that were really the case, we wouldn't need a Saviour in the first place. But we do need a Saviour. And if we have become saved by His shed blood, then Christ has purged us from all sin. If His blood does not completely save us, then we are not saved by Grace and we will die in our sins and face the wrath of God's judgment. The point here is that there is no sin that remains for the person that is cleansed in the blood of Christ. All his sins have all been taken away in his baptism in the Holy Spirit.

John 1:29

- "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

The blood of Christ doesn't cleanse us from some sin, or even from most sin. It cleanses us from all sin. Anyone who puts forth the untenable argument that

Christ only paid for our past sins, is frankly, dabbling in absurdity. For that would assuredly mean that Christ has died in vain. For if we needed Him for our past sins, how then do we not need Him for any future sins? And if we don't really need Him for any future sins, then why did we need Him for past sins? It makes no sense. Moreover, if we say that we never commit any transgressions or sins after we are in Christ, we are a Liar and the truth is not in us. Because we all sin on a daily basis. And if we could pay for our own future sins, we wouldn't have needed Him to pay for our past sins. The wages of sin is death, and any sin at all will send a man to that judgment. Whether past, present, or future, our sin requires just payment, unless it has already been paid for in Christ's shed blood. Some of David's worst sins were after he was called and chosen as a man of God. Did that mean he had to go suffer in Purgatory for those sins? God forbid! For, as it is written, Christ paid for "all" of the sins of man at the cross (including David), and was raised to live as intercessor for all for whom He died.

Hebrews 10:14

- "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Christ didn't make us temporarily perfect before God, but made us holy before God forever. For if but one future sin had been left unpaid, then we would all face the second death as payment for that sin. Purgatory is contradictory to grace, and is no more than a myth invented by man to placate grieving souls, and fill coffers. The fact is, no one can purge the sins of those who have died. No gift of life has ever come by man's own works in paying for his own sins. It is preposterous to even imagine that by man's works he could pay for his sins. Neither does our imperfect works on earth cause for us to think that Christ's purging was insufficient.

Galatians 3:2-6

- "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?
- Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?
- Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.
- He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?
- Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."

These Christians had received the gospel of justification with joy, and the Apostle Paul is rebuking them for their error in thinking that after they were justified, they should believe in their own works for sanctification. God forbid, for justification and sanctification are all by the sovereign grace of God. They had to come to realize that our righteousness was not at all of human ability or merit, but even as Abraham believed and his faith was counted to him for righteousness. Righteousness means "no purging necessary." This doctrine implies that justification is not by faith alone when Christ's gospel is that the atonement for sin came from His work in paying the cost "in full." And if He didn't pay for all your sins, then you must stand before God and pay for them yourself. And that payment required is clearly not Purgatory.

Romans 6:23

- "For the *wages of sin is death*; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Scripture tells us that the wages [*opsonion*] or payment for sin is death, not a stint in the state of purgatory. And it doesn't teach that further purification is necessary to merit heaven. As we see in Romans 6:23, it declares that our eternal life is a gift of God. And that gift is without cost to us, and justifies our entrance into heaven.

Romans 5:18

- "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

The plain, simple, and often unpalatable truth is, this false teaching of Purgatory makes God's authoritative word, a lie. There cannot be a purging of venial, or any other (supposed) non-deadly sin by man. For if the wages of sin *is death*, then there are no non-deadly sins. And we must account for all sin at the judgment at the last day.

Matthew 12:36-37

- "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof *in the day of judgment*."
- "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

John 12:48

- "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him *in the last day.*"

No one can purge their own sin in the mythical state of Purgatory, all those who sin and reject Christ as their redeemer will be judged of God "in the Last day!" Every sin, every idle word, every evil thought will be judged before God in that day. And that is precisely why Christ had to pay for "all" of our sins, and why this doctrine is a house built upon a foundation of sand. All sin, by the law of God, must be judged of God, or purged by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if Christ is not man's Saviour, then man will be cast into the lake of fire to suffer the wrath of God for them. And God has been abundantly clear about this.

Hebrews 10:30-31

- "For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, *The Lord shall judge his people.*
- *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth because of the wrath of God, not a time of purification. The question is often asked, "*if there is no Purgatory, then where do the souls of people go after they die?*" It's almost as if Purgatory was invented to fill the gap. There are actually two answers to that question, depending on if the individual who dies was saved, or unsaved. When a saved (those washed in the blood of Christ) person dies, his soul goes to live and reign with Christ in Heaven. When an unsaved person dies, his soul goes into a state of unconscious existence in darkness and silence to await the 2nd Resurrection where it will stand for judgment. The soul of the unbeliever who dies doesn't live again (have conscious life existence) until the time that it stands before that white throne judgement before God.

Revelation 20:4-5

- "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given unto them: and I saw the *souls of them that were beheaded* for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; *and they lived and reigned* with Christ 1000 years.

- ***But the rest of the dead lived not again until*** the 1000 years were finished. This is the first Resurrection."

Here we see in God's word of the souls of both those who died for the cause of Christ (Martyrs), and the souls of the rest of those who died (the unsaved). It says the souls of those believers who were martyred lived and reigned with Christ upon thrones. Note carefully what it says in the next verse about the rest of the souls. It says, "*but the rest of the dead lived not again until the 1000 years were finished.*" Who are the rest of the dead? The answer is elementary if we understand that the first souls of the dead were believers. Then the rest of the dead has to be the unbelievers. These verses are contrasting the souls of believers who die, over against the souls of the rest of the dead. One group dies and yet goes to live and reign with Christ in Heaven, but the rest of those who die do not live again "until" the millennial reign is finished and the 2nd resurrection occurs. This phrase, "*lived not again until,*" is the state of the souls of the unsaved who die. They are in a non-life or no life-consciousness. Scripture defines the dead as being in silence, where they know nothing (Ecclesiastes 9:5). And they won't have conscious (knowing) existence again till they are raised up at the last day. The next thing the "rest" of the dead consciously knows is that it is the judgement. While the souls of the saints live, speak, they praise God, and they reign with Him. We can get some insight into the unsaved who die, from the Psalms.

Psalms 115:17

- "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that *go down into silence*. ***But we*** will bless the Lord from this time forth and forevermore..."

Here once again, we see the contrast of the reprobates who die, over against the saved who die. The reprobates are in a state where they can't repent, praise the Lord, or work off their sins. They have gone down into silence where they can't even speak, much less praise God. It's important to understand this verse tells us that the unsaved dead don't praise the Lord, neither any that go into silence, ***but that we*** (the saved) will praise the Lord now and for evermore. In other words, we will never go down into silence, never see death, never stop praising the Lord, whether living in this life or after we die. Because in truth, as Jesus said, even in death, yet shall we live. That is what Christ told us when speaking to Martha of our Resurrection in Him (The First). Jesus explained that He was the Resurrection and the Life and that if we were raised with Him, we would never die, even when death came upon the body physically. That's the contrast between the saved who die and yet live and reign with Christ versus the rest of the dead. The only mystery of where people go after death is the one that the proponents of Purgatory perpetrate in order to attempt to support a Biblically

untenable tradition. But When a house is built upon a foundation of untempered mortar, it will not stand the weight of scripture. The prophesy was the sure word of a Saviour who would take away our sins, not of our ability to purge them ourselves.

2nd Peter 1:19-20

- "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:
- Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."

Having been purged of "all" our sins in Christ, after death our souls are able to go directly to heaven to live and reign with Christ. Just as the thief crucified with Christ who found grace in the sight of God:

Luke 23:43

- "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

God's word points to something entirely different from Roman Catholicism. It doesn't suggest man goes to a place of purgation before he is with God, rather it illustrates the work of Christ instantaneously purges man from sin and makes him holy and acceptable that he can be presented to the Father. If anyone needed to get some uncleanness purged from himself before going to the Kingdom Paradise, it would have been this thief. But Christ's words assure us that it wasn't necessary, for Christ cleanses us of "ALL" sin when He redeems us. Thus this thief could go straight into the paradise with God that very day of his death. Christ made him totally pure, perfect, washed as white as snow before God. Believers aren't washed 99.9 percent clean, He cleanses us from "all" our sins.

1st John 1:7-9

- "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his *Son cleanseth us from all sin.*
- If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to *cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

And that is why Christ could tell the thief on the cross that today he would be with Him in Paradise. Because after his body died, he would go directly to live and reign in heaven with God. All souls of Believers go to live and reign with God after they leave the body.

Even the Apostle Paul reiterated this declaring that while we are in this body, we are in a sense as absent from the Lord. But when we leave this body in death, we are then present with the Lord. He did not say that when we leave this body in death, we must go to Purgatory before we are present with the Lord because that is not true. The Roman Catholic Church may hypothesize that Christ didn't wash us clean from certain venial sin, but those are the private interpretations and traditions of men. As Paul, we are "willing" rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord.

2nd Corinthians 5:6

- "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

Paul knew where the souls of the believers' go once they are absent from this body of sin. And that is why we labor in this world, that no matter if we remain here on this earth (in a sense, absent from the presence of the Lord) or die and be transported directly into the presence of God in Heaven, we may be accepted of Him. And that's what the context of 2nd Corinthians chapter 5 illustrates.

The Roman Catholic sacrament of penance, along with her related doctrines on satisfactions, indulgences, purgatory, and the supererogatory merits of the saints (which would include Mary's prayers and intercession), are nothing less than a blatant denial of the sufficiency of the merit of Christ! True Christianity believes the work of Christ was totally sufficient to cleanse us from all sin. The atonement totally expiates the sin of the believer, totally discharges our indebtedness to God's wrath in respect to judgment for our demerits. It thus fully satisfies the demands of God's punitive justice. We are justified and saved from any judgment of sin by His blood, not Purgatory.

Romans 5:8-9

- "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

Moreover, the perfect obedience of Christ fulfills all righteousness, earning all the merit needed to save those who are Chosen of God. But since Roman

Catholicism adds the prayers and good works of Mary, the saints, as well as their own merits to the merit of Christ, they cannot then contradict themselves in attempting to also proclaim they believe that Christ's atoning work was sufficient. That makes no sense whatsoever, and we all know it.

Proverbs 26:7

- "The legs of the lame are not equal: so is a parable in the mouth of fools."

Inconsistency is the hallmark of error, and contradiction is a token that something is not true. For the word of God is not a word adrift in a sea of confusion. The word of God is our anchor, not something that can be moved around from place to place in order to conform to our own traditions. Many of these theologians go to great lengths rationalizing and explaining away when the doctrine of Purgatory came into being. It's as if when, is an answer to why we would choose to believe it. If something is not only unbiblical, but also anti-biblical, it doesn't matter when someone came up with the idea, it cannot be righteously validated. I read one paper that went three pages long about how most religions pray for their dead, and more pages on just when the Catholic Church teaching started. And when finished, I understood less why they would believe this, than I did before I started. Because I was looking for Biblical backing and didn't really care about when the doctrine was established. For it's not in scripture, it is in fact antithetical to scripture, and it is a doctrine bankrupt of consistency, logic, or even simple reasoning in the scriptures. God never spoke about it, His prophets didn't write about it, Jesus didn't teach of it, the Apostles didn't mention it, it's not in any of the books of the Old Testament, it's not in any books of the New Testament, indeed it's not found in Church writings anywhere. And the reason is because it is not part of the word of God. Why then should serious Christians waste time worrying about exactly when the Roman Catholic Church added this doctrine, or the non-canonical books they believe that speak of it? The scriptures prescribe Christian religion, not by the traditions and catechisms of men. For the scriptures are the pathlight for our feet.

Proverbs 4:26-27

- "Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.
- Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil."

Is there a Purgatory? It is not unreasonable to ask where these people got their specific information about purging sins in the afterlife in order for them to formulate the doctrine of Purgatory? Following scripture faithfully means to not turn away from it to the right hand or to the left. And nowhere does scripture

mention Purgatory. And would the holy God who cannot lie declare salvation an eternal free gift, and then after death send you to suffer to earn it?

Ephesians 2:8-9

- "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:
- Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Salvation and the righteousness it carries is quite clearly a gift, not something that can be earned in Purgatory. The traditional teachings of the Roman Catholic Church stand as a testament to their inconsistency:

"All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation, but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven."

-Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1030.

"The truth has been divinely revealed that sins are followed by punishments. God's holiness and justice inflict them. Sins must be expiated. This may be done on this earth through the sorrows, miseries and trials of this life and, above all, through death. Otherwise the expiation must be made in the next life through fire and torments or purifying punishments." -Second Vatican Council, p. 63.

Their own traditions testify against them in how unscriptural these ideas are. And there is no getting around the fact that it is a doctrine that is extrabiblical, as opposed to Biblical. The most common Catholic response to this fact is to point to the discredited books of Maccabees (of the Apocrypha books) as an authority. Some in their Church use other religions' beliefs that there exists a place called limbo (a place of conscious existence) for the dead, as evidence. But this is not evidence of anything except that spurious religions hold to pagan beliefs. And why would anyone want to equate the rituals and beliefs of other false religions to the doctrines of God's Church anyway? And the argument that we should believe it because, "The Church teaches it," is circular reasoning, since the Roman Catholic Church has no authority to create a doctrine apart from the scripture, and then teach that we must believe it because by their authority it's deemed true.

Another claim of proof for Purgatory's existence is that 1st Peter 3:19 speaks of this state, a place that is neither heaven nor Hell where souls are in prison. Sadly, some misguided souls have actually been deceived into thinking 1st Peter actually refers to such a place. But when one builds their beliefs on extrabiblical ideas, the penchant is to try and "mold" the scriptures to make them conform to whatever one wants to believe. Regardless of what a scripture actually speaks about, it can be twisted to appear to speak about something else. However, when

we base our beliefs on the unadulterated word of God, then we know that we have truth. Try as people may to place Purgatory into the scriptures, they inevitably fail miserably. Because this doctrine will not stand the test of the "Light" of scripture. And I think that it is incumbent upon us to take a careful look at man's use of this verse in attempting to justify Purgatory. And let the Holy Spirit of truth reveal God's word to whom it will.

1st Peter 3:18-20

- "For Christ also hath *once suffered for sins*, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit:
- *by which* also He went and preached unto the saints in prison;
- which sometimes were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."

Is there a Purgatory and does this passage confirm it's existence? The true understanding of this comes only through comparing scripture with scripture to let the Bible interpret itself. We first search the scriptures to find out just who the spirits in prison are. We cannot just guess at it, or presuppose, we ask God by our careful examination of His word. When we do this, we find conclusively that scripture identifies the spirits in prison as the unsaved. Indeed, it is the spirits in prison for whom Christ came to set free. Look at where God instructs us to try or prove the spirits.

1st John 4:1

- "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the Spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Who are these spirits that we instructed to test and are not to believe if they are not of God? They are the spirits in prison. In other words, they are those who are still held in Satan's house of bondage. And these are the spirits that 1st Peter tells us that Christ, "by His death," preached deliverance to. The death He suffered was on the cross, the debt He paid was for our sins, and the spirits He set free by the preaching "thereby," are all of us (who become saved).

Acts 2:31

- "He seeing this before spake of the Resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in Hell, neither His flesh did see corruption."

This is the first Resurrection, that if we have part in it, we will never die. The death that Christ suffered at the cross was more than simply physical death, and more than simply the grave. For what many people do not "really" understand is the "real work and accomplishment of the cross." And that is what this passage in 1st Peter is referring to when we read it carefully, "in context."

1st Peter 3:18

- "For Christ also hath once suffered for Sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God, being put to death in the FLESH, but quickened in the Spirit. ***By which*** He went and preached unto the spirits in prison;"

The key words here are, "by which!" By His death and suffering for the unjust and His being quickened (Resurrected), He preached the gospel to the spirits in Prison who were sometimes disobedient. The efficacy here is in the death and resurrection of Christ, which preached to the spirits and set them free from that prison. The anointing of the Spirit of the Lord is that which "preaches to all of us," and is by the death and resurrection of Christ. We have all received that preaching of the Spirit by Christ's death.

1st John 2:27

- "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as ***the same anointing teacheth you of all things***, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him."

Who is in you and who is teaching you, proclaiming (preaching) the truth of the gospel to you? Is it man, or is it the anointing of the Spirit of Christ in you, which was acquired by Christ's death? Who preached peace to the spirits in Prison, and how was that accomplished?

Ephesians 2:15-18

- "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;
- And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body ***by the cross***, having slain the enmity thereby:
- ***And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.***
- For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

This is how Christ came and preached peace to those far off (Gentiles) and those near (Jews). This is an undeniable truth that through Him, we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. This is how Christ preached peace unto the spirits in prison. By the one Spirit that came to dwell within us and set us free from bondage to Satan. We were risen up with Christ when He was quickened, and receive this spirit in Him, the fulfilment of prophecy. He brought the gospel of deliverance to man. And the efficacy of the cross reaches all the way back to Noah. He also (as all saints) needed to be set free from the prison house of bondage to Satan. For Satan keeps men's spirit in that prison house of darkness, and it was only by Christ's death and resurrection, that he bound Satan and spoiled his house. Indeed, it was for this reason that Christ came as the Deliverer. To set these spirits free! And Jesus Himself says it as plain as it can get when He quoted His fulfilment of this prophecy:

Luke 4:18

- "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to ***Preach Deliverance*** to the ***Captives***, and recovering of sight to the blind, to ***set at liberty*** them that are bruised."

Is this talking about some imaginary sojourn to Purgatory to preach to spirit captives there? No, not at all. It's talking about Christ's mission and what it would accomplish in salvation. He came to deliver those who were held captive in Satan's Prison house of darkness, that they might be set at liberty and made to see. This is the spirits in Prison that 1st Peter says He preached to by His death. This is the accomplishment of His death and quickening. When Jesus read in the Temple those words of Isaiah (recorded in Luke) and said that He was the fulfilment of this, He is shedding light upon just whom the spirits in prison were.

Isaiah 61:1

- "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me; because the Lord hath anointed Me to ***Preach good tidings*** unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to ***proclaim liberty*** to the captives, and the ***opening of the Prison*** to them that are bound."

Isaiah 42:6-7

- "I, The Lord have called Thee in Righteousness, and will hold Thine hand, and will keep Thee, and give Thee for a COVENANT of the people, and a LIGHT of the gentiles;

- To OPEN the blind eyes, to bring out the *Prisoners from the Prison*, and them that sit in darkness out of the *Prison House*."

It was for this purpose that Christ came to lose the spirits in prison. Is God saying here that the prison houses of that day didn't have enough light in them, and their doors needed to be opened, or that Christ was supposed to go to the literal prisons and free the people there? He had the perfect opportunity to free John the Baptist in Prison, but John remained there. That was because the Prison house that is in view in all these prophecies was the Prison house of Satan. The spirits in "this" Prison house is the spirits that Christ came to preach deliverance to, and to set at liberty. This is what Christ meant in Luke chapter 4 when He said He came to preach deliverance to the captives. He, by His death and resurrection, preached deliverance to these spirits who were sometimes disobedient (being in bondage to sin), and thus had the penalty of death hanging over their heads. He delivered not just you and me, but Noah and the eight souls in the ark as well. He set "their" spirits free just as He did you and me, because the efficacy of the "real work and accomplishment" of the cross reaches all the way to the beginning. Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8) because His blood covers those who were saved before the cross (as Noah) in the Old Testament times. That's what 1st Peter is talking about. The Spirit of Christ that those Christian men like Noah had, was because of His effective work on the cross. Christ's Spirit testified to their spirits in prison beforehand. And what He witnessed or preached of would be made effectual when their redeemer would come to earth in the flesh. In fact, in studying 1st Peter, if we would only read a few chapters before this verse about Noah, we can see where God speaks about these great prophets and how the spirit of Christ was indeed in them. And yes, this Spirit preached (testified) of His sufferings. But don't take my word for it.

1st Peter 1:11-12

- "Searching what, or what manner of time *the Spirit of Christ which was in them* did signify, when it testified beforehand the Sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.
- Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

Noah had the Spirit of Christ within him, and He preached to Noah's spirit in prison just as He does to our spirit when we became saved. So clearly, by the death of Christ were the spirits in Prison preached deliverance, and that efficacy reaches all the way to the old testament prophets, to whom the spirit of Christ

testified beforehand of it. Truly, without Christ dying for them as well as us, they would remain spirits in prison. These Old Testament prophets were saved by the work of Christ by faith, looking forward to the efficacy of the Cross. We are saved by the work of Christ by faith, looking backward at the efficacy of the Cross. Both of us are risen with Christ, His Spirit preaching to ours, which was in the bondage of Satan's spiritual Prison.

Romans 8:15-16

- "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.
- The Spirit itself *beareth witness with our spirit*, that we are the children of God:"

The spirit of bondage is gone, we are risen with Christ having now the Spirit of adoption. His Spirit bears witness with our spirit! It preached to our spirits in prison and set it at liberty. We no longer have the spirit of bondage to fear. When Jesus Christ said, this day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears (Luke 4:21) He was talking about His mission to free the unsaved from the prison house of Satan. If we look at it carefully, without the blinders of Church tradition or preconceived notions, we can see clearly what it means by, by His death, Christ went and preached deliverance to the spirits in Prison.

Mark 3:27

- "No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then He will spoil his House."

In the exegesis of this parable we can see that Satan is the Strong Man, and Jesus is the one who came to the strong man's house to spoil (*take, by Conquest his possessions*) it. So what are the possessions of this house of Satan that Christ came to take by conquest? It is those chosen by Grace to be delivered. When we become saved, we have been taken from the prison house of Satan. We are no longer spirits in bondage to him. We no longer serve him, we become servants of God by right of His victory at the cross.

John 8:34

- "...whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. and the servant abideth not in THE HOUSE for ever: but the son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you FREE, ye shall be free indeed (truly)."

The Jewish people didn't understand Jesus (like many today) and protested that, "*we be Abraham's seed and were never in Bondage to anyone.*" They didn't understand that Jesus was talking about the prison house of Satan that He came to deliver them from. That's the House that Mark 3:27 and Matthew 12:29 talks about that Jesus came to spoil or seize the goods from. The Prison House where Satan held the spirits in prison.

So looking at 1st Peter 3:18 in light of the testimony of the rest of scripture, we can now get a clearer, and more importantly, more Biblical perspective of what is being said there about the spirits in Prison. This is bible doctrine, rather than extra-biblical traditions and ideas. The spirits in Prison that 1st Peter says Christ went and preached to "BY" His Death, are our spirits. His death and resurrection is how He preached deliverance unto the spirits in prison, spoiling both principalities and powers. And of course, that deliverance of the spirits in prison by His death includes the old testament Saints, Noah, and all others who were sometimes disobedient (we all have sinned and need deliverance by Christ's death) and so also had to be set at liberty. It's just what Matthew 12:29 and Mark 3:27 illustrates. Christ spoiled the Prison House of Satan, and the spoiling reaches all the way back to the Noah, indeed, to the Beginning. We are all saved the same way. The blood of Christ that delivers our spirits from Prison saves old covenant believers, and new Covenant believers.

Hebrews 10:10

- "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all.*"

It was done for Abel, Noah, You, and and for Me, Once, and for all. And the death and resurrection of Christ did it. That's what 1st Peter is telling us. There is not a word there about man purging his own sin, a place called Limbo or Purgatory, man praying for dead Saints, and Saints praying for us. Christ died once, for all. God inspires the same truth declared to the Corinthians.

1st Corinthians 6:11

- "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Thus it is evident that the true believer is already purified and made holy that he can enter heaven, because Christ put away all sin by His death on the cross. Doctrinal truth comes from following scripture faithfully, not in the Church attempting to lead it. Roman Catholicism attempts to lead scripture in constantly

in trying and prove the doctrine of Purgatory. One such instance how they handle Matthew chapter twelve:

Matthew 12:32

- "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Roman Catholics read this passage where our Lord declares there is a sin that will not be forgiven in this world, or the world to come. And they claim that this "implies" that there are sins that will be forgiven in the world to come. But there is no such implication made by this text. This is a plain case of "reading into" scripture what is not there. That's like me making the comment that, *"if the children are bad, there will be no presents handed out in this Party, nor in the Party to follow,"* and then someone retorting that my words "imply" that in the Party to come, there must be presents handed out. That would be absurd. What I am simply stating "emphatically" is that there will "not" be any presents given out at either Party. My form of expression implies nothing more than that. And That is what God is declaring to those who blasphemy the Holy Spirit. He is simply emphasizing the unpardonable nature of the sin against the Holy Spirit. In other words, don't ever expect forgiveness, because there is none anywhere, or at anytime. And we can see this by comparing scripture against the parallel verse found in Luke:

Luke 12:9-10

- "But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.
- And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven."

Clearly God is simply saying this sin will never be forgiven, there is no implication whatsoever that there is forgiveness for sin after death. Moreover, that would contradict other scriptures that clearly teach exactly what the wages of sin is, how eternal it is, and why we needed a Saviour to avoid it.

But even with such evidence, there will always be a segment that will delude themselves in thinking that there is a second chance after death. I received the following message some time ago from someone who was sure that it justified his belief that there must be a Purgatory. But carefully note that while on the surface he may appear to make a good point, once compared and tested by the

word of God, we see that it is based on sloppy exegesis, and reading "into" scripture, rather than reading out of scripture. It has no foundation whatsoever on which to stand.

Check 1 Cor. 3:15, "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. "Now, the only place that Protestants know of there being fire after this life is in Hell. But once a soul is in Hell, there is no hope of salvation. But this passage speaks of men being "saved; yet so by fire." Can't be Heaven. They're already saved. Has to be this third state we call Purgatory.

And there is another passage in the Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox Bible. 2 Macc 12:46, "It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they might be loosed from their sins."

It is these kinds of interpretations of passages by Roman Catholics that are a danger to babes in Christ who may not yet be able to see through their self-justifications. 1st Corinthians does not say one word about Purgatory, and it isn't basis for anyone to believe that man can suffer the wrath of God to pay off his own debt of sin. It is your typical "*Straw Man*" argument, where they declare the scriptures say "A," and "B," (true) and then conclude that it actually proves "C" (not true). But this is no defense for Purgatory, it is handling scriptures deceitfully or dishonestly.

Colossians 2:8

- "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

1st Corinthians chapter three is talking about the Christian's work or labor in their building up the Temple of God, which is the Church. Our Job is to bring the gospel to the world that we might build the Temple of God, brick upon brick. Every time we preach the gospel and someone hears our witness and becomes saved, by efficacy of Christ we have worked and laid another brick in the corporate Holy Temple of God.

1st Corinthians 3:11

- "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

This verse tells us we build the Church on the foundation Rock, which is Jesus Christ! In our labor to bring people into the corporate Church, we bring both true Christians, and those who merely profess to be Christian. God signifies these true believers as Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones. And He speaks of those who profess Christ, but are not really born from above, as wood, hay and stubble. These diverse types of building material denotes different types of people in the Church. But each and every one of these living stones (professing Christians), must stand before the throne of God at the last day, and it will be made manifest (known) if they were truly saved or just professing salvation. Because they are tried (proved) by fire. And only the truly saved are tried by fire and shall not be burned. For Christ went through the fire for them and purged out all their sins.

You will note that Gold, Silver, and Precious Stones are Precious or valuable materials that do not burn up in a fire. They represent the people of the Church building who are truly saved. On the other hand, Wood, hay, and stubble are worthless materials that will burn very easily. These represent the people who have come into the Church building because of our evangelic work, but who are not truly precious (saved). Thus we better understand the language in the next verse of our being builders, and of the types of building material we placed in the Lord's house.

1st Corinthians 3:12-13

- "Now if *any man build* upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;"
- *Every man's work* shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall *try every man's work* of what sort it is."

We learn here that it's talking about "our works" being tested to see what kind of material we brought into the building, not the burning of one's soul. If it is worthless, it will be burned up, and we suffer the loss of what we built upon Christ. In other words, we may have labored (worked) to bring someone to Christ and "thought" that they were truly saved, but the fire of God will reveal that he wasn't saved at the last day. So our work of bringing that man in, is our loss. It was done in vain. On the other hand, we are not then lost ourselves because our labors were not successful. Because our salvation is not a works based salvation where it is dependent on our work of successfully bringing people into the Church. We are saved by fire, not by our own labors or works.

1st Corinthians 3:14-15

- "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.
- If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

Note again, the continual emphasis on "our work" which we have accomplished in bringing these materials in, not on Purgatory, or on Limbo, or on anyone having ability to purge themselves. The emphasis here is on the people we laid into the Temple building, and how this affects them who were built, and us who are the builders. The reward [*misthos*], or hire that we receive for our labors, is eternal life. And each one of us recognize it is our own duty, but its all accomplished in Christ. As also is illustrated in verses 7 and 8.

1st Corinthians 3:7-8

- "So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; ***but God that giveth the increase.***
- Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour."

i.e., we all receive a full and perfect reward according to our labor because Christ in us makes our labour perfect. It is not us, but God that gave the increase, and we labour or work because He worked within us. Thus the reward according to our work means according to the work of Christ within us. Thus we are saved not by our own works, but according to the work of Christ within us. And this is also what is illustrated in the verse that declares, "we will suffer loss, yet we ourselves are saved." The phrase "yet as so by fire," is the method of our salvation. We may have worked, and not been the perfect preacher, the perfect builder, and so will suffer loss of what we thought was a solid building material, yet it's not laid to our charge, because our works are made pure through the fire. So when our works are tried or tested, we are saved by fire just as those whose work remains, because our works are made perfect in Christ.

The suffering of the cross was not simply the death of a man, it was Hell. The Hell that we deserved for our imperfect works, Christ endured for us in order to make us Holy and ***Unblamable before God*** (2nd Corinthians 5:21). It is being pure and unblameable that is the reason we are without fault, though our work be burned. The fires of God purified us, because our sins (our impurities) were burned up in Christ, and we come out the other end of the fire, pure. That's why the Believers are spoken of there as Gold, Silver and Precious Stones. We won't burn because we're precious to God and have already been tried and purified in the fire. We are Precious because Christ brought us through the fires of Hell

(that we deserved) and purified us as Gold and Silver. This beautiful Spiritual picture is illustrated clearly in the prophecy of Zechariah.

Zechariah 13:7

- "...Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones.
- and it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord, two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the THIRD PART shall be left therein.
- ***And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will Refine them as Silver is refined, and will try them as Gold is tried:*** They shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, it is My people: and they shall say, The Lord is My God!"

This is how we are saved so as by fire! These verses about the Gold and Silver have nothing whatsoever to do with Purgatory and 1st Corinthians is simply saying that all in the Church are not truly saved. And the fires of God will try each brick that is laid in the Church to see if it will stand as a precious stone, or be burned as wood and worthless stubble. This wood and stubble we brought in by our works don't effect our salvation, for we are not saved by our works, but as through the fire. We are blameless. This is to "signify" that we are refined so that we are without impurities, the like-figure of Gold and Silver being refined in a foundry, so that it is without impurities.

Malachi 3:2-4

- "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:
- And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness."

If you've ever been to a foundry, you'll know that when raw gold or silver ore is heated with fire, the impurities of dirt, rocks, and useless gunk rises to the top, and these impurities are scooped off, and what is left is the Pure Gold or silver. Well, that is the analogy that God is using here to show how our sins were purged from us in the fire. Our sins are equated with this worthless dredge burned off in the refining process. We need no further purging, because Christ took on Himself our sins, and went through the wrath of God in our place to make us pure and righteous.

2nd Corinthians 5:21

- "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

Our sins were put on Christ and when He went through the fires of Hell enduring the wrath of God for us, all our impurities (sins) were burned away so that what was left was Precious and pure, without sin. That is the analogy of the refiner's fire making pure gold and silver. This is just another of the many marvelous spiritual pictures of "the Real work and accomplishment of the cross." Any idea that the verse that speaks of us being saved by fire is talking about Purgatory is wishful thinking at best, or a deceitful handling of the scriptures. 1st Corinthians 3:12-15 is declaring that if our works or labor in this life has brought in bricks of poor quality (wood, hay, and stubble) they will be burned when they pass through the fire. But the believer whose works are all burned up will still be saved. i.e., all their works in building the Church will be burned up and only the true believer themselves will escape through the flames.

As for the passages they speak of from the book called Maccabees (the unlawful and spurious additions to scripture), it is a stirring example of exactly why these books are not God inspired, and were rejected as Holy Canon not only by the Jews of the Old testament, but by the faithful early Church fathers which grew from them.

Hebrews 9:27

- "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, *but after this the judgement.*"

Scripture doesn't say that it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this they have another chance in Purgatory. It says there is death, and afterward judgment. When we die, the next thing we will consciously know (if we're unsaved), is the judgement throne of God. And we are judged for all the sins we have committed in this life. Indeed, how could we think that we could pray someone out of judgement when they are beyond the grave, when the wages or payment for sin is death? It can only be the same way man can purge his sins after he dies and goes to Purgatory. In other words, "Only" in a fantasy world where doctrines are not by authority of the word of God, but are any pagan idea or imagination of man's heart.

Jeremiah 23:16-17

- "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision *of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD.*
- They say still unto them that despise me, The LORD hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you."

Purgatory is the doctrine that says, no harm shall come to you, because you don't need to follow God's word, you can purge your own self out of hell. And we should all understand this error, and the folly of using these sundry passages to justify Purgatory. The non-reliance upon the word of God for interpretation of scripture is a carnal product of the flesh. The lack of understanding that the Bible alone and in its entirety is the word of God today, is at the root of man's delusion. The lack of understanding that words of Church leaders are not words of God, is the same mistake that man has made for centuries. Israel learned that the hard way. If we search the scriptures for truth, God in His mercy will guide us into what is truth, and show us what are man-made doctrines. How can we know the difference? Because what is truth is "in" God's word, and what is not truth comes from the extra-biblical sources. You won't find it in God's word anywhere, and that is your "key" not to follow after it and be deceived. We keep the word of God faithfully (1st John 3:24) by the Spirit within us. We will not follow what is the not word of God because we know it's not the voice of the Good Shepherd. This is the principle that some professing Christians just cannot understand.

John 10:4-6

- "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.
- And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.
- This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them."

Just as these people didn't understand how we can only follow the authority of the word of God, so many today cannot understand it. The whole question boils down to this. Do we trust that God paid for "all of our sins" as He unambiguously declared, or do we deny His "finished work" by declaring we ourselves must purge some venial sins that are left, ourselves. The word of God makes no distinction as Roman Catholicism does of between venial and mortal sins. God's word is very clear that all sin is mortal (The wages of sin is Death), and unless washed away in the blood of Christ, will result in sinner's eternal

condemnation. When Christ went to the cross, did He pay for a few sins, a lot of sins, the majority of sins, or did He pay for "all" of our sins? I can tell you this, if He didn't pay for all of our sins, then we are of all men most pitiable for believing in Him as Saviour, because there is no way we are going to pay for them ourselves and free ourselves from the penalty of Hell. For Hell indeed is the penalty for sin. It is the penalty of any sins. Despite nonsensical untenable claims to the contrary by some, "the wages of sin is death!" It never has been spending a time in a spirit bound Prison wistfully called Purgatory, purging our own sins. It is not being bound in this place until we can cleanse ourselves (Which is Heresy) of our venial sins. It is not until some Saint prays for us to be delivered from that place. These are all man's rationalizing words, and they are worth absolutely nothing. God's word is that the wages of sin is death. And the final sigh from those who refuse to condemn such unrighteous practices is that they grasp at straws in attempting to justify it. One person wrote to me:

"what's the big deal about Purgatory, and why do you speak out so forcefully against it when it seems to be, at best, a harmless doctrine. For if it doesn't help, what harm has it done?"

Truthfully, this doctrine is about as harmless as a poisonous snake. For it makes God a liar, it gives man a false sense of hope for man that spends his life in sin, and it denies that Christ is the only propitiation for our sins. The Heresy of Purgatory is simply a rejection of Christ as having made us perfect by His blood.

Psalms 51:7

- "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Psalms 79:9

- "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake."

Isaiah 1:25

- "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin:"

Here again, the token of purging, as metals are purged from their impurities, God purges us from all our tin. He has purged away all our sins. Saying that we need further cleansing in Purgatory is like saying Christ didn't do a good enough job getting rid of our sin when He was on the cross, so we have to "help him out

with the remaining portions." It's blatantly denying the "finished" work of Christ in making us Clean, Pure, White, Unblameable, Without Spot, Holy, and Without Fault before God. Many people, even some true Christians, do not really comprehend the absolute heresy and horror of this doctrine. It denies that Christ purged us from sin, past, present, and future, and worse, it declares that there is another "way" for man to get rid of sin and get right with God. Think about that for a while. Once again, in reality, once examined, there is no other word to describe this teaching in the name of Christ, except that it is Anti-Christ!

There will always be those who will move heaven and earth to try and support the doctrine of purgatory, but the fact is, it's unsupportable by scripture, or even by rational Christian thinking. In fact, it's unsupportable even by simple human logic. It is totally against all that God declares about the COMPLETE and Finished (John 19:30) work of Christ on the cross. If Christ's work was not a finished work, then who could be saved? Such a position would leave no one saved because we all sin, whether in word, thought, or deed. God says, "Whatever we do, do all to the Glory of God." Therefore, if we spend one millisecond doing something that is not to the Glory of God, then we have sinned. But praise God, "all" our sins are forgiven. The idea that a saved person still has some sins left over that will keep him out of heaven, or that an unsaved person can purge some sins himself in Purgatory, is an Antichristian denial of the gospel of Christ.

2nd Timothy 3:5

- "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

The power of God in the world is the Spirit, and the sword of the Spirit is the word of God. When we deny the word of God, we are in a real sense denying Christ. For He is the Word of God, made flesh, in whom we must believe.

God tells us, "whosoever is born of God, does not commit sin. -1John 3:9" That is because all of his sins are washed away, so that he "has no sin" in God's eyes. We are deemed righteous by God because we are clothed in the righteousness of Christ and cannot come into condemnation. The only sin we have is in the flesh. And as long as we are in this body of flesh we will have that sin of the flesh. But we praise God for assuring us that flesh and blood shall not inherit the Kingdom of heaven. It will be left here as dust when our souls go to be with the Lord. We will receive new bodies. So it is self evident that if we leave our sinful flesh when we die, and our soul has been cleansed, washed clean in the blood of Christ, then when we go to meet the Lord we are presented perfect before in, clothed in white.

Colossians 1:27-28

- "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:
- Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:"

If we are in Christ Jesus the hope of glory, then we clothed in His righteousness and presented perfect before God. The unanswerable question for Roman Catholicism then is, "what is there left to purge?" In truth, the only thing man needs to purge from himself is this bankrupt idea that we can purge sins after death. We need to purge it "now" while there is time to repent and receive the hope of Glory. Man needs to cast off this senseless unchristian idea, which is nothing more than an invention of those who are insecure in Christ, or living in humanistic reasoning. We cannot purge our own sins, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. If we could, we wouldn't need a Saviour.

Romans 6:23

- "For the wages of sin is death; *but* the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

We will only see eternal life by the propitiation of our sins through Jesus Christ. Roman Catholicism is really teaching its people not to have any confidence in the full forgiveness of their sins through the death of Christ alone. But the gift of Christ, rather than penance in Purgatory, is the only assurance of eternal life. It is the confusion of this doctrine manifested in how an act of penance, is claimed to not really be an act of penance as much as an act of God (according to Roman Catholicism). The claim that Purgation is administered by God, this, "as if" Christ's atonement for our sins was worthless after we died. It's like Alice in Wonderland getting curious-er and curious-er. It is self-attesting that the damnable doctrine of purgatory must be defended against, and dismissed as heretical. For the entire concept of after-life purging is based on a doctrine that is antithetical to Grace. Namely, that in the end man must be purified by his own suffering after death. The gospel of Christ teaches us that being in the kingdom is not about human worthiness, it is about divine imputation of righteousness and sovereign grace. Which means we don't earn it, merit it, or suffer in order to get it, the Kingdom is given freely of God. Purgatory implies that there was something further necessary in order for us to be cleansed of all our sin.

Hebrews 9:14

- "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

By the blood of Christ we are already thoroughly purged when death comes. In truth we will never suffer in the after-life, and we suffer for Him in this life only because we live for Him and that is antithetical to this world. It is salvation by His Grace alone! It is bestowed in this life, and this is why the Apostle Paul stated that we labor that, "*whether present or absent from the body, we may be accepted of him.*" There is no condemnation of God for any sin that we would need to be purged of.

Romans 8:1

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."



Was Mary in Need of the Atonement?

Patrick Madrid, writing in *This Rock* magazine, a Roman Catholic apologetic journal (December 1991), attempts to justify the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary by appealing to the Scriptures. The dogma he

defends is the decree of Pope Pius the IX (*Ineffabilis Deus*, 1854) given to us in its essence by Madrid:

"Mary, from the first instance of her conception, by singular privilege and grace granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the savior of the human race, was preserved from all stain of original sin." (*This Rock*, pg.9)

Mr. Madrid suspects that the Christian challenge to the Romish Immaculate Conception of Mary will be three pronged. First, he thinks that some will argue only God can be sinless. He thinks some will attempt to eliminate the possibility of Mary being sinless because they think *only* God can be sinless. This 'straw man' he quickly consumes in hopes of gaining momentum for the more serious objections.

We agree with Madrid. The elect of God in heaven as well as the elect angelic host are sinless. We seriously question whether any Christian would argue the impossibility of Mary's sinlessness by saying only God can be sinless. Mr. Madrid need not lecture the Christian world on the future sinlessness of God's elect or the current sinlessness of God's elect angels. We are aware that it is a *non sequitur* to claim that Mary could not have been sinless because God only is sinless. Putting this aside, prongs two and three are the meat of the matter and deserve careful attention.

In prong two, Madrid focuses his attention on how he would answer one biblical proof that might disprove the Immaculate Conception. His problem verse is Luke 1:47 where Mary says, "*My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.*" Madrid knows he must deal with this verse. Christians believe Mary was like other members of the human race, i.e., tainted with original sin and guilty. She was in need of Christ's atoning work on the cross. Madrid agrees only that Mary needed a savior to *prevent* her from sinning. The Romish contention is that Mary did not need a savior from her actual sins because she did not have any!

Madrid believes that Jesus was Mary's savior because He *blocked* her from contracting Adam's sin and *preserved* her from sinning. He argues that Mary needed to be saved only from "contracting" sin. In this sense salvation is said to be "anticipatory" e.g., before the contraction of original sin. This preemptive salvation is said to be especially and only for Mary. With a slight turn of the pen the Catholic theologian tries to redefine salvation to mean saved from *ever contracting* sin and *preserved* from ever committing sin. We would point out that there is no biblical justification to be found for this definition of salvation. When deliverance from sin is defined by the word "salvation" in the New Testament, it is at all times referencing Jesus "...who will save His people *apo ton hamartion auton* (away from their sins)." (Matt. 1:21) There is no biblical provision for such a preëptive salvation.

Furthermore, salvation is earned by Jesus Christ. To say that Mary was preëemptively 'saved' is to say there was no need of a substitutionary atonement for her. This puts Catholic theologians on the horns of a dilemma. If Mary was saved *before* she ever sinned, then in what sense did Christ have to die for her? If she was kept from becoming dirtied with original sin then what need was there of a guilt offering or sin offering for Mary? Catholic theologians teach that the very purpose for which Christ died cannot be applicable to Mary. Mary never needed redemption or reconciliation; according to Catholic thinking, Mary was never *not* reconciled!

According to Madrid, Christ was not Mary's savior in any biblical sense of the term "salvation". Yet he must do something with the clear text of Scripture which says, "my spirit rejoices in God *my* savior." To get around this he says Christ was Mary's savior because He stopped her from being born in sin and also preserved her from ever sinning!

We pause and ask for one shred of biblical proof that Mary was "kept" from both original sin and actual sinning by God. We search the Bible in vain to find even a hint of preëemptive salvation. The only salvation spoken of in Scripture is an actual salvation from the penalty and power of sin. It is pure fabrication to impose another meaning to the word "salvation". It is entirely arbitrary to fantasize that God must have kept Mary from actually sinning.

We have it on Scriptural authority that Christ died for the "ungodly" (Rom. 5:6). What will it be for Mary? If she was never ungodly then in what meaningful way did Christ die for her? If she needed a savior, then in what meaningful way was she without sin?

The only way around this is to adopt a new definition of salvation for Mary. Thus, Madrid imports a new and novel brew of Catholic tea to the text of Luke 1:47. He invites us to sip. We think not! We would rather appeal to the sure word of God's inspired text: Romans 3:10-12;23 and Romans 5:12-21. These texts and others speak clearly that all, including Mary, have sinned and equally bear the guilt of Adam's sin.

Since these passages testify directly to the impossibility (with the exception of the Son of God) of being born without sin, we are anxious to engage Rome on their significance. This brings us to the 3rd prong of our argument against Madrid, i.e., the exegesis of Romans.

What we expect here is some insightful exegesis from Madrid. What we get is a wave of the hand! The Roman Catholic answer to Romans 3:10-12;23 and Romans 5:12-21 is, incredibly, as follows:

"Common sense tells us whole groups of people are exempt from Paul's statement that 'all have sinned.' Aborted infants cannot sin, nor can children or severely retarded people." (pg. 10)

To counterbalance our appeal to Scripture, Madrid offers "common sense" theology! How great a mist in the pews from such a small cloud in the pulpit! It is ironic that he would appeal to common sense after earlier declaring boldly that "Marian doctrines" are found to be "through prayer and *Scripture study* ...indeed biblical" (pg. 9, emphasis added)

In his common sense theology Madrid thinks that Paul cannot have in mind "everyone" when he asserts in Romans 5:12, "as through one man sin entered into the world and through sin death, so also to all men death passed, because *all sinned*." Madrid thinks to do so would be to take the passage in a "crassly and literal and universal sense..." (pg. 10)

Early on in Madrid's article he is content to promote a special indulgence to Mary. He wants us to believe Mary did not fit the depravity passages that indict all mankind under sin. She has been exempted! How? God simply did it! Now Madrid throws in his philosophy about others. He says others are born without sin. This is to soften the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.

For now we will dispense with the wildly outrageous statement that "young children cannot sin," and get to the point. Madrid thinks children in the womb cannot sin and thus are not guilty. But wait, what about Adam? Evidently, Madrid has no use for the idea that children in the womb are guilty of sinning in Adam. This appears to be his argument. But we fear that Madrid has run afoul even of his own religion on this point. The Council of Trent specifically implicates infants in the sin of Adam. Even Madrid must realize that Rome baptizes her babies in order to remove the guilt of original sin. Or will Madrid stand against his own religion with his common sense theology? Listen to Trent:

"The holy council declares first, that for a correct and clear understanding of the doctrine of justification, it is necessary that each one recognize and confess that since all men had lost innocence in the prevarication of Adam, having become unclean and, as the Apostle says, by nature children of wrath, as has been set forth in the decree on original sin, they were so far the servants of sin and under the power of the devil and of death, that not only Gentiles by the force of nature, but not even the Jews by the very letter of the law of Moses, were able to be liberated or to rise there from, though free will, weakened as it was in its powers and downward bent, was by no means extinguished in them." (Council of Trent, 6th Session)

While it is true that infants in the womb do not sin, it is the biblical record that infants are conceived in a state of sin. Older Catholic doctrines state this clearly. The common sense theology of Madrid with such declarations as, "whole groups are exempt from Paul's statement that all have sinned," is not so common even among Romanist thinkers. It certainly carries no weight of responsible biblical interpretation.

For the record, we do not find infant involvement with the sin of Adam to be satisfactorily dealt with by Catholic theologians. Neither do we find their remedy of sacramental baptism to reflect the teachings of Scripture. But the point we are making here is that even Roman Catholics have a doctrine of original sin which extends to infants! It is useless for Madrid to say that some groups are exempt and thus set the stage for a total life exemption of Mary. With the exception of Mary, Rome admits to no exceptions as evidenced by their sacramental baptism for all infants.

Biblically, there are no exceptions in Romans 5:12-21. Paul is crystal clear in his analogy that Adam was the Federal head of his race. The clause "because all sinned" is a reference to a solidarity relationship between Adam and all mankind, including Mary! Hence, it is in Romans 5:19 where we find Paul very straight forward:

"For as through one man's disobedience the many were constituted (*kathistemi*) sinners..."

Madrid is quite right. If certain groups are exempt from the "all have sinned" rubric, then it could possibly clear the way for an easier acceptance of the Immaculate Conception. But the honest exegete is constrained by the very force of the texts considered to conclude that no one, *not even Mary*, is excluded from the need of being saved out of their own sin as well as the sin of Adam. It is the worst sort of biblical exposition for Madrid to wave a hand at the analogy expressed by Paul in Romans 5. Madrid glibly asserts, "he was writing to adults in our state of life" (pg. 10). What manner of exegesis arrives at this conclusion? Sadly for Madrid, his understanding of mankind's sinfulness leads him into immense errors. His zeal to protect his wrong view of Mary leads him to violation and distortion of biblical passages. It appears his definitions and common sense theology even flies in the face of his own religious dogma!

In essence, the modern Catholic theologian can only dream of something called a pre-emptive salvation for Mary. It is utter fantasy! A cursory analysis of Romans 5 defies any safe haven of the "exempt." It awaits a future article to show the shallowness of Catholic exegesis on Romans 5. Modern Catholic theologians find themselves on slippery terrain as they attempt to encompass within the framework of biblical theology the Pope's decree of the Immaculate

Conception. Their fantasies and imaginations are put to the test as they try to align this decree with the biblical data. But to no avail! Each new effort serves to corrupt and destroy the integrity of other clear passages. Their folly is evident.

We would remind the readers that this type of evasive exposition comes from the same people who insist that Christ transubstantiated Himself into a piece of bread at the last supper. We marvel at the literalism of the Romanist when it comes to "this is my body" and how quickly he deserts it when it comes to "*all* have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God," or "My spirit rejoices in God *my* Saviour."

The Mary Mystery in Roman Catholicism

Now, before I begin, lest you think that I am 'Catholic bashing', I can assure you, I am not. Now, before I begin, lest you think that I am Catholic bashing, I assure you that I am not. Nor am I suggesting that those who follow the Catholic faith are, by definition, not saved. Luke tells us in the Book of Acts, verse 17:11, that we are to be Bereans, testing every teaching against Scripture.

Paul writes, "All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). My point is to merely take an intellectual look at the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and compare them to Scripture, which I consider all authority as the Word of God.

The biggest difference between the Protestant and Roman Catholic (RCC) churches is the issue of authority. Whereas the Protestant church was founded on the principle of sola scriptura, which means that the Word of God stands alone, the Church of Rome holds that its authority is on an equal footing with Scripture, this being affirmed in 1545 ad - (Tradition is granted equal authority with the Bible.)

On what basis does the RCC claim equal authority with the Word of God?

The words of Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 16:18:

And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

The RCC maintains that in this passage, Jesus was instituting the Roman Catholic Church, with Peter as its head (and first pope). The Protestant church maintains that Jesus was referring to himself as the rock on which the Church would be built. According to the RCC, the gates of Hell will not prevail against

its organization. According to Protestants, the gates of Hell will not prevail against the Lord.

Because of this interpretation, the RCC deemed that the doctrinal decisions made by their church leaders were in fact on an equal footing with Scripture. When decisions are made and edicts proclaimed that seem to conflict with Scripture, as this article will document, the RCC interpretation is binding over any other interpretation of the Word of God.

Ironically, it wasn't Paul or James, but Peter himself who negated this line of thinking and clarified that Christ was indeed referring to himself, not Peter and not the Catholic Church. The Book of Acts records his comments on this:

Acts 4:11-12

"This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone. Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Additionally, I submit for your review the story in the Gospels of Jesus being out in the wilderness fasting and being tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:1-10). After 40 days and 40 nights, the devil came to Jesus and said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to turn to bread." Jesus replied, "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God".

Well, Satan had had millennia to study Scripture. He figured that he could play this game.

He then took Jesus to the highest point at the Temple in Jerusalem and said to Him, "If you are the son of God, throw yourself down - for *it is written*, He shall give his angels charge concerning you. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone." To which Jesus replied, "It is written, do not tempt the Lord your God."

Not willing to give up that easily, Satan then took Jesus to the highest mountain where they could see over the land and all of the kingdoms within it. He gave it one last shot - "All these things I will give you if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus replied, "Away with you Satan, for *it is written*, you shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve".

Now, one would have to conclude that Jesus was a smart guy, right? At least smart enough to think on His feet when presented with the challenges of the devil. Did Jesus start making things up as He went along? Did He lay down

new interpretations and create groundbreaking precedents? No, He did not. What He did in fact do was rely on the Word of God: *"it is written."* If its good enough for Jesus in such a predicament, shouldn't it be good enough for us in everyday life? Shouldn't it be good enough for the RCC?

Here follows a listing of extra-biblical decrees made over the years by the RCC. This article is designed to only focus on what I will call the Mary Mystery, her ascent in status via the Church of Rome over the years, and what it means to the Vatican today.

From that list, I am going to note the progress made by the RCC to take Mary from her human state to the state of being Mother of the Church.

- 431AD - Mary Worship began
- 600 - prayers directed to Mary (Ave Maria added in 1508)
- 995 - canonization of saints
- 1854 - immaculate conception of Mary (her sinlessness)
- 1950 - assumption of Mary (she never died)
- 1954 - Mary proclaimed Queen of Heaven
- 1965 - Mary proclaimed Mother of the Church
- 1980 - Mary proclaimed Spouse of the Holy Spirit

Mary's Perpetual Virginhood

*"Based on the Proto-evangelium of James, (Circa 120 AD), it is written and accepted by the RCC that Joseph was a widower with children from his former marriage. According to this document, when Mary's birth was prophesied, her mother, St. Anne, vowed that she would devote the child to the service of the Lord, like Samuel had been by his mother (1 Sam. 1:11). Mary would thus serve the Lord at the Temple, as women had for centuries (1 Sam. 2:22). A life of continual, devoted service to the Lord at the Temple meant that Mary was not able to live the ordinary life of a child-rearing mother, and so she was vowed to perpetual virginity."*²

Scripture says nothing about Joseph being a widower. Scripture does, however, tell of the siblings of Jesus. Matthew 13:55 names His brothers as James, Joses, Simon, and Judas. Mark 6:3 confirms this and additionally references the sisters of Jesus in the process. Luke 16:6 differentiates between Judas, the brother of Jesus, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.

Giving the benefit of the doubt, let's assume that these men (and women) were not the blood brothers and sisters of Jesus, but merely were stepsiblings from a previous marriage, as the Catholic Church asserts.

Does Scripture address this? Yes, it does. Matthew 27:56 clearly says that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is also the mother of James and Joses. Mark 15:40 confirms this, as does Mark 16:1.

So we can see by Scripture that Mary indeed was not a virgin for the duration of her lifetime, since she was the mother of several children besides Jesus.

Mary's Sinless Nature and the Immaculate Conception

The RCC maintains that Mary was sinless throughout her life. *"But by a special intervention of God, undertaken at the instant she was conceived, she was preserved from the stain of original sin and its consequences."*³

What does Scripture say about this?

Romans 3:23

For *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Friend, there is no "out" clause there. The word "all" in this reference is translated from the Greek word, *pas* (Strong's 3956), which means: "all, all things, every, all men, whosoever, everyone, whole, all manner of, and/or every man." There is no wiggle room for assumption here. When the Lord said "all," he meant "all."

Additionally, Mary confirmed her own sinful nature and need of a Savior as recorded in Luke 1:47. Scripture is clear on this one as well.

Hebrews 7:26

For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens

Jesus was the only Person to have ever lived a sinless life. To claim that Mary did as well is to say that Christ is "one of" the sinless, not "THE" sinless one. Without Christ's unique, sin-free life, where does that leave His sacrifice? Where does that leave the promise of salvation?

Mary's Position

Was Mary blessed? YES!! Mary was chosen among women to be the vessel who bore the Messiah. The Bible honors Mary as the mother of Jesus and calls her "blessed...among women" (Luke 1:28) but not *above* women. What does this mean to us today? Nothing. No offense intended, but Mary's job is *done*.

Matthew 12:46-50 tells the story of Jesus speaking to the multitudes. In the middle of His sermon, He is interrupted and informed that His mother and brothers are outside of the building and that they wish to talk with Him. Does He stop speaking and go to them? No. His response was, "Who is my mother and who are my brothers?" Indicating the crowd He was addressing, He continued, "Here are my mother and my brothers, for whoever does the will of the Father in heaven is my brother, my sister and my mother."

Jesus made it clear to those He was teaching that Mary was no more or less a sinner in need of a Savior than anyone else in that room. Was He being disrespectful? No. He was making a point: We *all* have the responsibility of doing the will of the Father, no matter how great or small.

The Heavenly Assumption of Mary

Enoch "walked with God; and he was not, for God took him" (Gen. 5:24). He was translated so as not to see death (Heb. 11:5). Elijah was taken to Heaven in a fiery chariot (2 Chron. 2:1-13).

Scripture is silent about the death of Mary. This is where the RCC fills in the gap.

"The doctrine of the Assumption says that at the end of her life on earth Mary was assumed, body and soul, into heaven, just as Enoch, Elijah, and perhaps others had been before her. Some people think Catholics believe Mary "ascended" into heaven. That's not correct, Christ, by his own power, ascended into heaven. Mary was assumed or taken up into heaven by God. She didn't do it under her own power."⁴

"The Church has never formally defined whether she died or not, and the integrity of the doctrine of the Assumption would not be impaired if she did not in fact die, but the almost universal consensus is that she did die. Pope Pius XII, in Munificentissimus Deus (1950), defined that Mary. "After the completion of her earthly life"--note the silence regarding her death--"was assumed body and soul into the glory of Heaven." In short her body wasn't allowed to corrupt, it was not allowed to remain in a tomb".⁵

The RCC theory that Mary was "assumed" into Heaven has no basis whatsoever in Scripture. The doctrine of the assumption is pure conjecture, and dare I say it, wishful thinking on the part of the RCC. The RCC needs for Mary to have been assumed into Heaven, for without that particular piece of the puzzle, the remaining two topics have nothing upon which to rest.

From catholic.com : *"Where is the proof from Scripture alone? Strictly speaking, **there is none**. It was the Catholic Church that was commissioned by Christ to teach all nations and to teach them infallibly, guided, as he promised, by the Holy Spirit until the end of the world (John 14:25, 16:13). The mere fact that the Church teaches the doctrine of the Assumption as something definitely true is a guarantee that it is true"* (underlined emphasis author's).

Nothing backs up this "doctrine" except that the Catholic Church says it's so. Since the Catholic Church believes it can't err, the teaching is held to be true by default.

Prayers to Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and in the hour of our death. Amen.

Catholicism teaches that Christ is a stern, wrathful judge who cannot be approached by sinners. It teaches that Mary, on the other hand, is a tender, understanding, merciful intercessor who is more sympathetic and compassionate than the Lord and will plead our case to Him with the forceful persuasion of a loving mother.

The practice of petitioning Marian intercession is to pray to Mary, asking her to intercede as the mediatory between man and God.

Where does this teaching come from?

Let's begin again with the Word of God.

1Timothy 2:5

For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.

Scripture tells us that there is but ONE mediator between God and Man: Jesus. The Church of Rome maintains that Mary and the saints are mediators as well, based on:

1Timothy 2:1

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,

The RCC makes no distinction between intercession and mediation. Intercession is praying to the Father for another, just as one would pray for the healing of a friend. Mediation on the other hand, is the practice of believing your prayers are heard only through another - a mediator or mediatrix.

Additionally, no distinction is made between the living and the dead. The RCC claims that the dead are in Heaven with the Lord and therefore can hear our prayers and intercede with the Father on our behalf. We have already documented that the RCC agrees that Mary did indeed die (although in 1950, the wording was changed to say "her earthly life was completed").

What does Scripture tell us about communicating with the dead?

Deuteronomy 18:10-12:

There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or **one who calls up the dead**. For all who do these things are an **abomination to the Lord**, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you.

These are harsh words from the Lord. Communicating with the dead is an abomination?

Let's turn back to Scripture and see if Jesus weighs in at all on the subject of prayer:

Matthew 6:7-8:

And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

Apparently, the message that Jesus was trying to get across is that we don't have to chant things over and over as if the Lord is not listening to us. I guess you could say that not only is it an issue of quantity vs. quality, but additionally it is written that the Lord knows our needs, meaning that we don't need for anyone who predeceased us to petition the Lord on our behalf.

In the next set of verses, Jesus gives us the model prayer:

Matthew 6:9

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name

(addressed to the Father directly with thanksgiving)

Matthew 6:10:

Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

(offering submission to God's will)

Matthew 6:11

Give us this day our daily bread

(prayer for needs and provision)

Matthew 6:12

And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

(confession of sins asking our forgiveness and forgiveness of others, intercession for others)

Matthew 6:13:

And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

(prayer for protection as we don the armor of God and praise for His glory)

Nowhere in this prayer do we see Jesus instructing us to pray to any entity other than the Father. Nowhere. If we were to ask for intercession from those who went before us to petition the Father, then why wouldn't Jesus himself have told us about it? Why did it take until the 7th century for the RCC to tell us about it? Just something to think about.

One other way of looking at this is to consider your view of God. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Is God big enough to hear my prayers, or does He need a "switchboard" to help Him?

2. Does God care so little about me that He will only listen to the requests of people appointed by the Catholic Church and not me directly?

3. If giving the power of an audience with the Father is, as the RCC maintains, Mary's "call," then what if she is too busy or deems me too unimportant?

God is omnipotent. Mary is not. She was a mere mortal, just as the rest of us today.

Our God is a jealous God. Exodus 34:14

For you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

The RCC maintains that its members do not worship Mary. But isn't praying for her help giving her preference over praying to the Father to ask for His help?

Even more so than this, God is a loving God. He desires (not requires) a relationship with us. He wants to be first in our lives, not to be relegated to second place. He longs to her from us, so why shut Him out?

The Queen of Heaven?

"Since Mary is Jesus' mother, the fact that she is also the Mother of God is inescapable, for if Mary is the mother of Jesus, and if Jesus is God, then Mary is the Mother of God."

This sounds innocent enough, right? Well, let's look again to Scripture.

John 1:1, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

Rev 1:8

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

You see, Jesus was God before Mary was even born. Mary is the vessel that produced the Messiah from the line of David, she is not the mother of God.

Now, assuming that you disagree with me and you do feel that Mary was the mother of God, how far are you willing to take it? In 1954, Mary was elevated to

Queen of Heaven. In 1965, she was named Mother of the Church. Quite a promotion, eh?

Pope Pius XII proclaimed Mary to be the Queen of Heaven on October 11, 1954. The full text of the *Encyclical on Proclaiming the Queenship of Mary* can be found on website of Vatican. I will only cite two of his comments in this:

35. But the Blessed Virgin Mary should be called Queen, not only because of her Divine Motherhood, but also because God has willed her to have an exceptional role in the work of our eternal salvation.

36. Now, in the accomplishing of this work of redemption, the Blessed Virgin Mary was most closely associated with Christ; and so it is fitting to sing in the sacred liturgy: "Near the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ there stood, sorrowful, the Blessed Mary, Queen of Heaven and Queen of the World."

Does Scripture address this? The 44th chapter of the Book of Jeremiah is dedicated to the subject of there being a "Queen of Heaven," past or present and the Lord's opinion of that particular classification.

In addition to her titles of "Mother of God" and "Queen of Heaven" Mary is also known as the "Spouse of the Holy Spirit."

Citing Prudentius in his February 2, 1974 writing, *Apostolic Exhortation For the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion To the Blessed Virgin Mary*, Pope Paul VI proclaims this marital relationship between the Holy Spirit and Mary, "*The unwed Virgin espoused the Spirit.*" And from the writing of Pope John Paul II, *On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist*, penned on February 24, 1980, we have:

"In order that this unity and the constant and systematic collaboration which leads to it may be perseveringly continued, I beg on my knees that, through the intercession of Mary, holy spouse of the Holy Spirit and Mother of the Church, we may all receive the light of the Holy Spirit."

How far will the RCC go in the promotion of this woman's role? Would you believe me if I told you that a movement is afoot to elevate her once again to being the sinless, co-redemptrix of salvation? Given the comments from Pope Pius XII above, it shouldn't surprise you. Let's look at where the Church stands today on this issue.

In 1996, the Pontifical International Marian Academy was asked by the Vatican to investigate the possibility of redefining the Marian titles to include

"Mediatix, Coredemptrix and Advocate" (summary can be found [here](#).) Their findings were absolute on the Mediatix and Advocate roles, but with no binding precedent, they were inconclusive on the title of "Coredemptrix."

The group that is in charge of this groundswell effort is Vox Populi (Voice of the People), led by Dr. Mark Miravalle. Its mission is to gain the approval of the 5th Marian Dogma, her elevation to co-redemptrix for salvation. How do they explain this deviation from Scripture?

"This 'collaboration' or 'co-operation' or 'participation' of the Mother of Jesus 'Marian co-redemption,' or more specifically, Mary is referred to as 'the Coredemptrix with the Redeemer'" (Vox Populi)

In other words, "Jesus couldn't have done it without her," and Vox Populi feels that we therefore need to recognize that and declare Mary the co-redemptrix of salvation. The group's website cites many examples of the current Pope, John Paul II, using the terminology "co-redemptrix" in his addresses, using the same definition as they. They are asking that the doctrine of co-redemptrix no longer just be referenced, but that it becomes official church doctrine, ExCathedria.

Vox Populi released a statement on June 11, 2000 announcing that its petition for the 5th Marian Dogma, the *Papal Definition of Our Mother Co-redemptrix, Mediatix of all Graces, and Advocate, and the Triumph of Her Immaculate Heart*, had surpassed the 6,000,000 signatures mark.

Bottom Line

Peter confirmed that Jesus is the rock on which the Church should be built, not himself and not the Catholic (or any other) Church. Matthew, Mark and Luke confirmed that Mary was not only the mother of Jesus, but of several other children as well. Mary confirmed that she herself was a sinner in need of a Savior.

Friend, Mary did not ask for this attention. Better yet, I feel quite comfortable in saying that Mary would be saddened and ashamed that people are placing so much undue importance on her role in this day and age. Mary had a role to fill and she obeyed the Lord and filled that role. Her job is now done. Let her rest in peace.

The Mary Mystery? I am sure that she is as bewildered by all of this as I am.



The Creation story in Genesis is not the only creation “story” in the Bible. Actually, even what is in Genesis is actually multiple stories. Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 are actually two different accounts of the Creation event in the book of Genesis with conflicts between the two narratives. This suggests that these stories were not meant to be a chronological and factual account of Creation but, especially with the more poetic form of Genesis 1, are intended for a different purpose. Ancient Near Eastern cultures, when making sense of the world around them, were not as much interested in putting such factual accounts together as “truth”. For them, “truth” was something much deeper and could be found in narratives that, while not necessarily factually true, exposed that deeper truth through the telling of the story.

Creation in the Bible

One of the most maligned, disbelieved and perverted sections of the Bible is the first three chapters of Genesis. If one were to attend any secular university, or any modernistic or liberal church, one would be told that the early chapters of Genesis do not record actual events. The secular humanist college professor and modernist pastor would argue that these early narratives are myth, legend, saga or parable. In other words, there was not a literal Adam and Eve or a literal space-time fall in history. Given the current and widespread denial of a historical, literal Adam and Eve (and the connection of a historical Adam to the New Testament exposition of the gospel), it is very important to understand the Bible’s teaching regarding the historicity of Adam.

In the examination of the historicity of Adam, one needs to consider the following topics. First, one must consider the fact that the modernistic and neo-orthodox rejection of the historicity of Adam is founded upon unbelieving and apostate axioms.⁴ Christian Liberals and Bartians have come to their positions on Adam *not* because of a careful exegetical study of the Bible, but because of their unbiblical, rationalistic, modernistic presuppositions. One must never forget that these men are not formulating their theories in a detached, objective manner. They have an axe to grind. Therefore, they ignore the clear and abundant biblical proof that Adam was a real, literal, historical figure. Second, one must briefly examine the arguments used to deny the historicity of Adam. It will be proven that these arguments are fallacious. The arguments against the historicity of Adam are either founded upon blatant lies (e.g., macro-evolution, higher critical views of the Pentateuch, etc.) or upon pure human speculation. Third, one must consider the overwhelming biblical proof that Adam really existed. One will see that the historicity of Adam and a literal space-time fall are

⁴Bartian or Neo-orthodox writers assign Adam and the fall to the realm of the supra-temporal or supra-historical. Thus, Adam and the fall do not occur within space and time. That is, Adam is not a historical person in the normal, traditional sense of the term. The fall and creation narratives (they argue) are parabolic or spiritual in nature. (Emil Brunner used the term “myth,” while Karl Barth preferred the term “saga.”) Harrison writes: “It was to the credit of the neo-orthodox theologians that they repudiated the puerile view of the fall that regarded the Genesis account as a conglomeration of narrative material merely designed to explain certain circumstances of human society and animal behavior. However, they were unable to accept the concept of the fall as an historical event, a matter upon which Barth in particular was quite evasive. Instead, they insisted that existential method was incompatible with the view of the fall as an occurrence in the remote past, maintaining that it was something that everyone commits. For this reason it was of paramount theological importance for anyone who was prepared to take a realistic view of human nature. For neo-orthodox thinkers the tradition of the New Testament as enshrined in Augustine and Calvin invited a conflict with modern scientific opinion.” (*Introduction to the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969], p. 458). In accord with their existential understanding of Christianity, Neo-orthodox theologians regarded the fall of Adam as representing the experience of the fall into sin of every man. Edward J. Young has refuted such intellectual nonsense. He writes: “When Adam sinned, he fell from an estate of being good into an estate of being evil. He was created by God as a creature of whom it could be said that he was ‘very good.’ From this estate in which he was created by God he fell into an estate of sin and misery and by his disobedience plunged all men into that same estate of sin and misery. Furthermore, by my sin I did not fall from an estate of being ‘very good’ into an estate of evil. I and all men like me were born into that miserable estate of sin, and when we sinned we simply showed that we were in such an estate. By sinning Adam became a sinner; by sinning we do not become sinners, we are already sinners. Sin does not cause us to fall from the estate wherein we were created, for we were born into a fallen estate. With Adam, however, the case was quite different. His sin brought him into a fallen estate. By disobedience he fell; by disobedience we simply show that we are already fallen. Hence, the experience of Adam was unique; it is his experience alone and not that of myself or of every man.” (*Genesis 3* [Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1966], pp. 60-61).

so theologically interwoven with the teaching of the gospel and the second Adam (Jesus Christ), that to deny the historicity of the first Adam logically leads to a denial of the very heart of the gospel itself.

Some General Principles of Liberal Theology

Before setting forth the biblical evidence for the historicity of Adam one must consider the following question: If the biblical evidence of a literal, real, historical, first created man named Adam is so strong, then why is this truth rejected by so many theologians and scholars in the twentieth century? The answer to this question is very simple. A time came in history (the late nineteenth through twentieth centuries) in which most scholars rejected the inspired, inerrant, and infallible revelation (the Bible) of the one living and true God. If one examines the church fathers, the medieval scholastic theologians, the Protestant Reformers (Luther Zwingli, Calvin, Knox), the Reformed confessions and all the great Puritan and Presbyterian theologians of the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, one will see perfect unanimity regarding the historicity of Adam. Modern critical theories regarding Adam grew up in the soil of unbelief. There was an *a priori* rejection of divine revelation in favour of first, a hyper-critical, secular-autonomous, rationalism, and second, an evolutionary understanding of the world. Thus one could argue that the two different views of Adam (i.e., literal-historical verses mytho-poetry) are in essence expressions of two diametrically opposed world views. The first view believes and receives the Bible as God's word. Therefore, it lets the Bible itself determine its own presuppositions, methodology and interpretation of various texts. This believing approach to Scripture is called "traditional" or "pre-critical." It dominated the theological scene for over eighteen hundred years.

The second view (Modernism or Christian Liberalism) believes that the starting point for truth is human autonomy. This position, therefore, assumes that the Bible is fallible and must be treated as any other human document. In other words, men must apply "scientific" techniques to these fallible human documents to discover the "real" authorship, various myths, redactions, historical and scientific errors and so on. One must keep these facts in mind when considering the historicity of Adam since the Modernist case for a mythical or parabolic Adam is not based on standard biblical exegesis. Christian Liberals simply impose their higher critical paradigm upon the text. Higher critical scholars are unbelievers who, with no objective evidence, force the Scriptures into their naturalistic, apostate mould.

To understand the higher critical paradigm that leads scholars to believe in a mythical Adam, one briefly must consider the basic theory regarding the Pentateuch of Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918). Wellhausen's views of the

Pentateuch have completely dominated modernistic Old Testament biblical scholarship from the 1880's to the present.⁵ “[H]e occupied a position in the field of Old Testament criticism analogous to that of Darwin in the area of biological science.”⁶ “He is to modern biblical scholarship what Abraham is to the Jew, the father of the faithful. More lucidly and compellingly than any other, he gave what many have considered the definitive formulation of the documentary hypothesis.”⁷ What is the documentary hypothesis? Wenham gives an excellent summary of this theory. He writes:

According to this view, the Pentateuch is composed of four distinct sources: J (10/9th century), E (9/8th century), D (7th century), P (6/5th century). These sources were successfully amalgamated, culminating in the composition of the existing Pentateuch in about the fifth century B.C. as far as Genesis is concerned, it was compiled from three main sources: J (comprising about half the material), E (about a third), and P (about a sixth). These sources were distinguished on five main criteria: different names of the deity (J speaks of Yahweh, the LORD, E and P of Elohim, God); duplicate narratives (e.g., different accounts of creation, Gen. 1 and 2; repetition within the flood story, Gen. 6-9; doublets within the patriarchal narratives, cf. 12:10-20 with chap. 20); different style (J and E contain vivid narrative, P is repetitious and fond of genealogies); and finally, different theologies (according to P, God is remote and transcendent; in J and E, God is anthropomorphic, etc.).⁸

⁵Although Wellhausen's theories (the documentary hypothesis) are still generally accepted in all university and modernistic seminaries, since the late 1960's many liberal O. T. scholars have openly challenged and disagreed with some of Wellhausen's views. These disagreements among source critics, however, are merely differences of opinion within the Wellhausen paradigm. Scholars are disagreeing over the source of various passages (e.g., J instead of P). “The typical OT introduction or critical commentary on Genesis tends to assume the JEDP theory in a fairly traditional form, and it still forms the heart of most lecture courses on the Pentateuch. No new consensus has evolved to replace Wellhausen's theory, so it still continues to be assumed by many scholars, though there is now widespread recognition of the hypothetical character of the results of modern criticism” (Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* [Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987], pp. xxxiv-xxxv),

⁶Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 21.

⁷Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis Chapters 1-17* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 13-14.

⁸Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, p. xxvi.

There are a number of reasons why the documentary hypothesis approach to the Pentateuch leads directly to the denial of the historicity of Adam. First, the biblical idea of special revelation is rejected in favor of evolutionary presuppositions. “Wellhausen combined his dating of the various alleged documents with a particular evolutionary reconstruction of Israel’s history, a reconstruction which was based upon the Hegelian philosophy.”⁹ Once special revelation and the historical character of Genesis is denied, Adam and Eve become nebulous figures who can arbitrarily be placed into any conception of primeval history that one desires. Second, the documentary hypothesis presents the Pentateuch as a gigantic fraud. The Bible explicitly declares that Deuteronomy and what the Modernists call “priestly legislation” was spoken and written down by Moses (cf., Ex. 24:4-8; 34:27; Nu. 33:2; Deut. 4:1ff; 31:9-24; Josh. 1:7-8; 8:31-32; 23:6-7; 2 Kg. 14:6; etc.). Modernists assert that power-hungry, conniving priests attributed various laws to Moses to gain a hearing for their own version of the law. Once one accepts the idea that much of the Pentateuch is fraudulent, it is logical to assume that Adam and the fall are merely folklore or a literary device. Third, the documentary hypothesis detaches the theologian or exegete from the biblical text and places the bulk of study and investigation squarely upon the subjective, arbitrary, and speculative theories of unbelieving men.¹⁰ The arrogance and stupidity of the modernistic understanding of the Pentateuch is truly astounding. In the name of objectivity and science, the Modernist has rushed headlong into a number of theories that

⁹Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960 [1949]), p. 137.

¹⁰The absurdity of the documentary hypothesis becomes evident when it is applied to documents which are known to have one author. If, for example, a book contained varying names of God (Jehovah, God), repetition, changes in vocabulary, duplicate narratives and so on, the consistent source critic would have to argue that such a book had multiple authors or redactors. However, the truth of the matter would be that a single author used different words and subtle variations in order to make the story more interesting to hold a reader’s attention. Good writers use variation on purpose. Further, historical narratives often use repetition to emphasize or to examine an event from a different perspective. Why don’t source critics apply their techniques to Plato, Aristotle, or Shakespeare? The answer is simple. Such works do not require faith in God and obedience to His law word. G. Ch. Alders adds another pertinent criticism of the documentary hypothesis. He writes: “When we study the literature which relates to the Pentateuch, it becomes apparent that the theory of splitting sources leads to an almost unending exercise in making new distinctions and recognizing portions. It has been correctly pointed out that the extremes to which the application of this approach has led have finally caused the entire method of splitting sources to appear absurd. Every sober, scholarly researcher must ask himself the question whether we are actually dealing with valuable reality or nothing more than a display of sharp ingenuity. It would be easy to give examples of those who have driven this theory to such extremes that they have lost touch with simple and obvious realities.” (*Genesis* [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981] 1:18).

are totally speculative, subjective and unprovable. In fact, as archeological discoveries keep advancing, more and more Modernist assertions are proven to be fallacious. “[I]t is quite evident that his [Wellhausen] theory of Pentateuchal origins would have been vastly different (if, indeed, it had been formulated at all) had Wellhausen chosen to take account of the archeological material available for study in his day, and had he subordinated his philosophical and theoretical considerations to a sober and rational assessment of the factual evidence as a whole.”¹¹ When men reject the inspired, perfect, sufficient solid

¹¹Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 509. If, as Modernists assert, the Bible is a mixture of truth and error, then none of the Bible can be trusted on its own authority. But what is this higher authority? Is it itself infallible, objective and totally reliable? No. The higher authority is merely the latest popular theory taught in modernist institutions. Higher criticism is not a hard science. An archeologist can uncover a pavement stone or ancient monument and can say that Pontius Pilate really existed and ruled when the Bible says he ruled. The modernist scholar, however, says things like: “Based on my analysis of the Hebrew grammar, there are two different authors of the book of Isaiah.” Does the modernist scholar really know whether two different men wrote the book of Isaiah? No. He has a theory. He has an educated guess based on his own modernistic presuppositions. The professing Christian in a modernist church cannot place his trust in any portion of Scripture without first consulting with the latest modernist authorities to make sure he is not believing in some foolish myth, or a redaction by a power hungry priest, or a legend from a second century Christian community bent on molding the human Jesus in their own image. When the sure foundation of the infallible Bible is replaced by the perverted opinions of secular humanists masquerading as Christian teachers, then (according to their own teaching) the Bible cannot be trusted at any single point.

Modernists are no different than Romanists, for the foundation of their theology is not *Scripture alone* but rather human tradition. Roman Catholics look to the church fathers and the theological inventions of the Middle Ages (e.g., purgatory, Mariolatry, transubstantiation, celibacy for priests and nuns, the papacy, etc.) while Christian Liberals follow the traditions of secular philosophers (e.g., Hobbes, Spinoza, Hume, Kant, etc.) and apostate theologians (e.g., Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Bushnell, Bultmann, etc.). For both Romanists and Modernists, the ultimate authority is not the Bible but the church. In Roman Catholicism, the Pope and church hierarchy determine doctrine, while among Christian Liberals it is seminary professors and the church bureaucracy. Basically, in modernist denominations whoever has the power determines the doctrine. The only limiting factor in modernist denominations is public opinion. Those in power hold back on the more radical views until the people in the pews who pay their salaries are won over to the new views. Jesus’ rebuke to the scribes and Pharisees equally applies to all Modernists: “Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.... They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch” (Mt. 15:6, 14). Paul warned us of such evil men: “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col. 2:8). Isaiah warned: “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Is. 8:20). The Modernist, by pulling the rug out from under objective truth, is left with an anthropological religion. By making man the ultimate reference point for truth the Christian Liberal is left with rank subjectivism and silly, mystical slogans. Once one understands the overall modernist position in its world view context one should

rock of Scripture for the *a priori*, spurious, imaginary deductive system of the Modernist theologians, they have rejected both God and truth.

Arguments against the Historicity of Adam

Having considered the general foundational principles of liberal theology which have resulted in the rejection of an historical Adam, one must also briefly examine the specific arguments used to reject the orthodox Christian position. There are five main arguments that are commonly used against the historicity of Adam.

1. The Talking Snake

The first argument is based on the fact that snakes are not able to speak. It is argued that the record of the temptation and fall obviously cannot be taken as a literal historical account because one not only encounters a talking snake (which is impossible and incredible), but Eve and Adam do not even regard a talking snake to be unusual. Thus, one must regard the whole account, and in turn Adam himself, as mythical or symbolic. The snake symbolizes evil and the account of the fall is merely a mythical or symbolic way for the primitive author and/or redactor to explain the presence of evil in the world. There are a number of reasons why this argument is fallacious and must be rejected. (1) The fact that a snake spoke and tempted Eve is not impossible or absurd when considered in the overall context of Scripture. In Numbers 22:28, Jehovah spoke through the mouth of a donkey. In the Gospel narratives, one encounters demons speaking through possessed human beings (e.g., Mt. 8:29, 31; Mk. 5:12; Lk. 4:41; 8:28). There also is the account of Satan entering into Judas immediately prior to his betrayal of Jesus (cf. Jn 12:27). If demons can possess and speak through fallen human beings, then Satan (the prince of demons) can certainly make use of a simple creature such as a snake. The idea that a snake spoke in Genesis 3 is only impossible if one rejects the supernatural character of Scripture. (2) In Genesis 3:14, God proclaims a curse against the snake and then, in verse 15, sets forth the conflict between God's people and Satan's people coupled with a prediction of victory by Christ over the devil. The idea that God cursed a poetic metaphor or an imaginary symbol is absurd. "The unusually vigorous condemnation pronounced by God in verses fourteen and fifteen seems almost pointless if the

never again fall for the argument that Christian Liberals are rational, objective and scientific while orthodox Christians are fideistic blind followers of authority. Biblical Christianity, which rests on biblical infallibility, is the only rational, defensible position. It is the only position that avoids subjectivism, relativism and mysticism.

whole account is merely the story of an inward struggle on the part of Eve.”¹² Furthermore, in verse 14, the snake is condemned to go upon its belly. “If the reference is to the devil or to some power higher than a snake, why this condemnation in verse fourteen?”¹³

A clever Modernist could argue that verse 15 actually proves his whole contention (that the narrative of the fall is mythical or symbolic) by pointing out that the sentence “He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” is a very non-literal prophecy regarding Christ’s victory over Satan. This argument falls to the ground, however, when one considers that subsequent revelation says very plainly that Adam’s fall into sin was a literal, historical event (e.g., Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Tim. 2:13 ff.; 1 Cor. 11:8ff.) and that the crushing of the serpent’s head *represents* victory over Satan (e.g., Rom. 16:20). “[I]t cannot be denied that there is poetry, symbol, and allegory in Scripture. But this does not warrant arbitrarily relegating a given portion of Scripture to the level of poetry, symbol, or allegory. The real issue is, what did the sacred text itself intend? When the Scripture intends to record history, we may not simply declare it to be poetic or symbolic or allegorical.”¹⁴ In other words, one must submit to the Bible when it identifies one portion of Scripture as a literal, historical narrative and another as truth expressed in poetic language. If one is not willing to submit to the clear teaching of Scripture on important matters of biblical interpretation, then one is no longer a true theologian but rather a mere speculative philosopher.

But (says the Modernist) isn’t it strange that Eve is not surprised or startled that a brute creature such as a snake can speak and make logical inferences? Although men and women today would obviously be shocked by a talking snake, one must keep in mind the naivete of Eve who although sinless, good and intelligent, had only existed for a day or two before the temptation. How was

¹²Edward J. Young, *Genesis 3: A Devotional and Expository Study* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1966), p. 15.

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴G. Ch. Alders, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 1:45. “That Genesis intended to give history is not difficult to establish. There is not one substantial argument which can be advanced that would prove the contrary. All the reasons that have been given from time to time for questioning this intent of the book are, at best, tenuous. The entire design of the book indicates that the positive intent was to present actual history. This is in keeping with the nature of the entire Pentateuch, of which Genesis is a part, and which is unmistakably a work of history. This is confirmed by its own self-designation as *tôledôt*—‘history’ or ‘account’ in Genesis 2:4; 6:9; 11:27; 37:2. This is in keeping with the general impression the entire book gives. Also, there is a constant use of a verb form which, in Hebrew, serves to describe historical events” (*Ibid.*).

Eve to know that such an occurrence was out of order apart from prior empirical observation, or personal training by Adam or God. The fact that Eve was not surprised is not a significant objection at all.

2. Common Creation and Flood Stories

The second argument against the historicity of Adam is based on the supposed parallels and striking similarities between the creation and flood accounts in Genesis and the ancient Mesopotamian creation and flood narratives (i.e., the *Enuma elish* and the Epic of Gilgamesh). This argument should also be rejected for the following reasons.

(1) Although there are some similarities between Genesis and the *Enuma elish* (e.g., Both narratives begin with something analogous to a watery chaos and end with the Creator at rest. There are also similarities in the sequence of creation.), the differences are much greater and significant. “Since a careful comparison with pagan mythology reveals only the most casual parallels between Mesopotamian and Hebrew accounts of creation, and in view of the fact that none of the characteristic elements of the Babylonian myths appear in Genesis narratives, it would seem unwise to employ the term ‘myth’ in order to describe the biblical accounts of creation, the fall, and so on...”¹⁵ Furthermore, both accounts flow from very different, antithetical worldviews. Harrison writes:

While the biblical writers showed a distinct interest in nature, they did not regard it as necessarily constituting the life of God, who was invariably considered as an independent Being. As distinct from the gods of Mesopotamian and Egyptian polytheism, the God of the Hebrews demonstrated His personality and sense of purpose by means of significant continuous acts in history. Man himself was a creature of God, furnished with a sense of destiny and cautioned to formulate the pattern of his life within the context of divine promise and fulfillment in history. Thus the Old Testament can never be regarded as a typical mythology in part or in whole, because it proclaimed God as the Lord of History in contradistinction to the polytheistic patterns that made life and history in general dependent upon the rhythm of natural forces.¹⁶

(2) There is almost a universal tendency among Modernist and Neo-orthodox theologians to assume, with absolutely no evidence, that the biblical creation

¹⁵Roland Kenneth Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, p. 456.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 457.

and flood narrative were in some manner based on the Mesopotamian myths instead of vice-versa. Thus, once again Modernists exhibit their anti-supernaturalistic bias. The idea that the author of the creation narrative in Genesis borrowed from near-eastern pantheistic mythology is a gratuitous assumption that betrays the clear teaching of Scripture.

3. Evolutionary Theories

The third argument against the historicity of Adam is that the creation account in Genesis totally contradicts the teachings of science, in particular macro-evolution. If evolution was true, this would be a good objection. However, since evolution is both thoroughly unbiblical and unscientific (properly defined) this argument is easily rejected. Why is evolution unscientific? Why is evolution an imaginative, atheistic myth? Note the following reasons: (1) Evolution is a biochemical impossibility. Not only was the idea of spontaneous generation disproved over one hundred years ago, but as scientists learn more about simple one-celled organisms, it is evident that the first step of evolution is about as likely to occur as the creation of a nuclear submarine in a junk yard during a tornado.¹⁷ (2) The geologic column disproves uniformitarianism and contradicts the continuance sequence charts found in all secular science textbooks. (3) The fossil totally disproves evolution. Not only are fossils found in the “wrong” areas of the geological column (the supposed *stratigraphic leaks*); but they always appear fully formed with the *complete absence of transitional forms*. “This fact is absolutely fatal to the general theory of organic evolution. Even the great champion of evolution himself, Charles Darwin, acknowledged this fatal flaw.”¹⁸ One could multiply proofs against evolution; however, space restraints require one to move on. Evolution is a religious faith based on a subjective, imaginary philosophy of origins. It is a factitious, atheistic scam.

4. Genesis as Poetry

The fourth argument is based on the idea that the early chapters of Genesis are poetry, not straightforward prose. Poetry (it is argued) indicates a non-literal, symbolic story. Therefore, one should accept the doctrine of these chapters, yet not make the mistake of receiving them as real history. Although one can find poetic elements in the early chapters of Genesis (e.g., Adam’s statement in 2:23 regarding his new wife, Eve), there is no real evidence to support the contention that these chapters are poetry. Hebrew scholar Edward J. Young writes:

¹⁷See Michael J. Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

¹⁸Scott M. Huse, *The Collapse of Evolution* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1983), p. 41.

We confess to becoming a little tired of reading dogmatic assertions about how Genesis three is to be interpreted when these assertions are accompanied by no evidence. The mere declaration that we misunderstand the chapter if we think that Adam was a real person who lived in a garden is not sufficient argument to lead us to agree. And the constantly reiterated error that ultimate truth cannot be given to man in propositional statements should, at least occasionally, be supported by evidence.

On the other hand, there is sufficient evidence to show us that we should read the third chapter of the Bible as prose and not as poetry. For one thing the characteristics of Hebrew poetry are missing in this chapter. If the writer, whom we believe to be Moses, wanted to write poetry, why did he not do so? Why did he make his writing look so much like prose that men thus naturally interpret it? Hebrew poetry is characterized by parallelism, in which two lines or parts of lines bear a parallel relationship one to another. Such parallelism is lacking for the most part in chapter three.... Everything in the chapter leads to the conclusion that the writer is giving straightforward prose. He believes that he is writing about certain things that did actually take place.¹⁹

Furthermore, there are no examples in the whole Old Testament of Hebrew poetry being used to set forth mythological stories. Although Old Testament poetry *contains* metaphorical, non-literal descriptions of God (e.g., having wings) and His activities (e.g., riding on the clouds), such poetic imagery is very easy to identify. The only reason that modern scholars refer to Genesis 3 as poetry or parable (with no textual evidence) is the simple fact that they themselves do not believe the events of this chapter to be real or factual. They are attempting to justify their unbelief.

The Biblical Evidence for the Historicity of Adam

Having noted that the typical arguments against the historicity of Adam are not based on sound reasoning, solid biblical exegesis or factual evidence, it is now time to examine the abundant evidence for the historicity of Adam. There are several arguments that need to be considered.

¹⁹Edward J. Young, *Genesis 3*, pp. 54-55.

1. Biblical Genealogies

The first argument is based on the biblical genealogies. All the biblical genealogies trace the human race back to one man—Adam (cf. Gen. 5:3 ff.; 1 Chron. 1:1 ff. Lk 3:38). Although a careful analysis of the biblical genealogies has conclusively proved that genealogies in the Bible are frequently abbreviated by the omission of unimportant names, the men that are listed were without a doubt regarded as real historical people by the divinely inspired writers.²⁰ There are a number of reasons why the genealogies support a historical Adam. (1) As noted, the men discussed were obviously meant to be regarded as real historical figures. In Genesis chapter 5 one is even told the age at which sons were born and the numbers of years the father lived after the birth of his son. Even the father's age at death is recorded. (2) The lists which set forth the godly line and the origin of confessional Yahwism are given (in part) to focus attention on God's grace and to highlight the significant contribution of this line to the world. This purpose would be meaningless and dishonest if these men were mythical figures. (3) If the genealogical list in Luke chapter 3 which traces the lineage of Jesus all the way to Adam is fraudulent, then the book of Luke and the gospel itself is based on myth or lie. Such a view would, at bottom, be a repudiation of the gospel itself. Note also how the account in Luke says "the son of Adam, the son of God" (3:38). Luke, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, makes it crystal clear that no human being preceded Adam; he came directly from the creative work of God. "Luke (like Paul in Rom. 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45-49) obviously thought of Adam as a historical person."²¹

2. An Explicit Statement by Paul

The second argument for the historicity of Adam is based on the explicit teaching of the Apostle Paul. When Paul preached and wrote under divine inspiration he taught a literal, historical Adam. To the Athenian philosophers (who rejected the original unity of mankind) Paul declared, "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26).²² When Paul preached the gospel to pagans who had no familiarity with the Old Testament, he first pointed them to God the creator of all and in

²⁰See William Henry Green, "Primeval Chronology" in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 47 (1890), pp.285-303.

²¹Robert H. Stein, *Luke* (Nashville, TN: Broadmas Press, 1991), p. 142.

²²Critical texts which generally speaking are based on the Alexandrian or Egyptian type of texts omit the word blood from verse 26. The verse would read from "one" (NASB, RSV) or "one man" (NIV) instead of "one blood" (KJV, NKJV). The meaning in both cases is essentially the same.

particular the creator of all mankind through the making of one man. Out of one man or one blood came every nation upon the earth.²³ Paul is telling the Athenians that their pagan concept of arising from the native soil and their view of racial superiority that is founded upon such a myth is completely false. Because all nations arise from one man created by the One living and true God, all men are responsible to obey this God and treat each other as equals created in the image of God. If one argues that Paul begins his presentation of the gospel with a myth, why should Paul be believed when he presents the resurrection (cf. Acts 17:31) in the same sermon? To teach that one (the creation of Adam) is a myth and the other (the resurrection) is true, is illogical and arbitrary.

3. The Comparison of Adam to Christ

Another passage which explicitly teaches the historicity of Adam is Romans 5:12-21. This section of Scripture is a primary passage for the doctrine of original sin. Paul compares and contrasts Adam and Christ (the second Adam). “[T]he two Adams are the heads of the two covenants. The one the representative of all who are under the covenant of works, communicating his image unto them; the other the representative of all who are under the covenant of grace, and communicating His image unto them. By the one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, and by the obedience of the other many shall be made righteous.”²⁴ Throughout this section Paul bases his whole argument regarding the reality of sin and death in the world to the one trespass of the one man Adam. “[T]he apostle places his imprimatur upon the authenticity of this account [Genesis 3]. The importance he attached to this incident of Genesis 3 is attested by the fact that the subsequent development of his argument turns on it. That sin entered through one man is our integral element of the comparison or parallel upon which is to be built Paul’s doctrine of justification.”²⁵ On six different occasions Paul explicitly asserts that sin and death reign over all because of the *one sin* of the *one man* Adam: “through one

²³John Stott notes that the findings of science support the teaching of Scripture on this issue. He writes: “All human beings share the same anatomy, physiology and chemistry, and the same genes. Although we belong to different so-called ‘races’ (Caucasoid, Negroid, Mongoloid and Australoid), each of which has adjusted to its own physical environment, we nevertheless constitute a single species, and people of different races can intermarry and interbreed. This homogeneity of the human species is best explained by positing our descent from a common ancestor. ‘Genetic evidence indicates,’ writes Dr. Christopher Stringer of London’s Natural History Museum, ‘that all living people are closely related and share a recent common ancestor.’”

²⁴Robert Haldane, *Romans* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1958 [1874], p. 213.

²⁵John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 1:181.

man sin entered the world” (v. 12), “by the one man’s offense many died” (vs. 15), “the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation” (vs. 16), “by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one” (vs. 17), “through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation” (vs. 18), “by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners” (vs. 19).

There are a number of reasons why modernists cannot sidestep the fact that this portion of Scripture unequivocally teaches that Adam was a real historical person. (1) Paul, writing by divine inspiration, assumes the historicity of Adam in his argumentation. If one does not accept the Genesis 3 narrative as genuine history, then Paul’s whole argument regarding Christ as the covenant head of those for whom He dies falls to the ground. “Inasmuch as the New Testament is the Word of God, whatever it asserts is the truth, and when the New Testament speaks of Adam and Eve as historical, the question is settled.”²⁶ (2) The point of this section of Romans is to show that Christ’s work remedies the fall of Adam and even gives blessings far beyond what Adam’s sin has done in the production of evil. “[T]he gospel of the grace of God has proved itself much more efficacious in the production of good, than sin in the production of evil.”²⁷ Paul’s argument (the obedience of the One versus the disobedience of the one) is wrong and misleading if Adam and the fall are myths. “You do not need an historical atonement to undo a mythological fall or a mythological transgression. All you need is another myth. But if Christ needed to be real to save us, then Adam was real, too. It is because Adam was real that Christ also had to be real to make atonement.”²⁸ Because of Adam’s sin real guilt and moral pollution passed to the human race. But, Christ (the second Adam) by His historical act of obedience (His suffering, death and resurrection) removed the guilt, penalty and pollution of sin for the believing sinner. “This section insists upon our accepting the story in Genesis as literal actual fact and history. You do not really

²⁶E. J. Young, *Genesis 3*, p. 57.

²⁷Charles Hodge, *Romans* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989 [1835]), p. 177.

²⁸James Montgomery Boice, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker 1992), 2:583. Boice adds this important point, “I am convinced that the major reason why the liberal scholars want to regard the opening chapters of Genesis as mythology is that they do not want to face the reality of the fall of the race in Adam or the guilt that flows from it. If there was no fall, then all this business about Adam and Eve and the serpent and the Garden of Eden is meant to only describe our unfortunate but inevitable human condition. It is meant to only say that we live in an imperfect world and must therefore continually struggle against imperfection. Rather than involving guilt, a framework like that actually gives us cause for pride and an imagined heroic stature. We are to not be blamed for anything. We have simply inherited imperfection and are, if anything, to be praised for how well we are struggling against it. In fact, we can be said to be doing better and better all the time.” (Ibid.).

understand the need of salvation unless you believe that history, and understand what happened in Adam, and our relationship to Adam. So it is a most important section, and it is only those who have understood its teaching who have not allowed certain scientists to stampede them into accepting the theory of evolution.”²⁹ How can one have faith in Christ as the second Adam, the Head of a new humanity when the first Adam is regarded as a myth or poetic metaphor? The issue of a historical Adam cannot be regarded as unimportant for its denial effects the very heart of the gospel.

5. Adam and the Resurrection

Paul also teaches the historicity of Adam when he discusses the resurrection in 1 Corinthians. He writes: “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.... It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man” (1 Cor. 15:20-22, 44-49). Paul, in a lengthy discussion of the importance and reality of the resurrection, contrasts Adam and Christ. He notes that there is a causal relationship between the death of Adam and the death of his descendants. There is also a causal relationship between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of His people. Then Paul points out that union with Adam is the cause of death and union with Christ is the cause of life. Both Adam and Christ are heads and representatives of groups of people. All who remain in Adam are condemned and all who are in Christ are justified and receive the resurrection unto life. Paul continues the contrast between the first and second Adam in his discussion of the nature of the resurrection. Note the parallels: living being—life-giving spirit; made of dust—the Lord from heaven. Before the resurrection Christians bear the image of the man of dust, but after the resurrection, they will bear the image of the heavenly man.

One cannot regard Adam as a mythical figure without also completely destroying Paul’s argumentation. Would Paul use a myth or lie as a foundation to establish the necessity of believing in a literal bodily resurrection for salvation? Perish the thought! If one half of the parallel is not really true or

²⁹D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans, Exposition of Chapter 5* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971), p. 181.

historical, why should anyone regard the other half as true (or a future reality). Further, if Paul is wrong concerning Adam, would it not be logical to conclude that he also is wrong concerning Christ and the resurrection? If Adam was not a literal, historical figure, then Paul was deluded. If Paul was deluded, then the doctrine of justification and the resurrection are not proper or worthy objects of faith. If the modernist scheme is true, Christianity is finished. “Remove Adam and his historicity from these verses and all the profound truths that Paul is teaching go by the board. They are then not truths at all and Paul’s words must be abandoned. Adam is gone, but so is Christ.”³⁰

6. Paul’s Teaching Regarding Women

There are other important doctrines that are based upon a literal, historical understanding of the creation and fall narratives. When Paul discusses women in public worship, he presupposes a literal, historical view of Genesis 2 and 3. Paul writes: “For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man” (1 Cor. 11:8-9). “And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression” (1 Tim. 2:12-14). Regarding the wearing of head coverings and the need to learn in silence, Paul appeals to two facts recorded in the history of creation. First, Eve was formed out of the man; she originated from him. This is a direct appeal to Genesis 2:21-23. Adam was created first, out of the dust of the ground. Eve was created for the man to be a helpmeet unto him. “Paul explicitly specifies that the woman was ‘taken out of’ (*ek*) the man and created to help, or to be ‘for’ (*dia*), the man.”³¹ Hodge writes: “In this way does the New Testament constantly authenticate, not merely the moral and religious truths of the Old Testament, but its historical facts; and makes those facts the grounds or proofs of great moral principles. It is impossible, therefore, for any Christian who believes in the inspiration of the apostles to doubt the divine authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, or to confine the inspiration of the ancient writers to their doctrinal and preceptive statements. The whole Bible is the word of God.”³²

When discussing women’s role in the church in the Timothy passage, Paul appeals to the fall as an historical event that demonstrates the dire consequences

³⁰Edward J. Young, *Genesis 3*, p. 60.

³¹George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), p. 143.

³²Charles Hodge, *I and II Corinthians* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974 [1857, 59]), p. 210.

of a reversal of leadership roles. The apostle “shows by a negative example the importance of heeding the respective roles established by God in the creation of Eve from Adam.”³³ “If we are to follow Paul’s reasoning, we must recall that like other exegetes, Jewish and Christian, he regards Adam and Eve as historical persons, but also as archetypes of the human race.”³⁴ If one argues that Paul was mistaken in his understanding of the creation and fall narratives, or, that Paul regarded these events as myths but deliberately mislead his readers to make a theological point, then (as noted above) one must logically deny the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures.

7. The Testimony of Christ

Not only does the apostle Paul teach a literal, historical Adam when he analyzes various doctrines, but Jesus Christ Himself bases His teaching regarding divorce on a literal, historical understanding of Genesis 1:27; 2:24. Our Lord said, “‘Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate’” (Mt. 19:4-6; cf. Mk. 10:6-8). Christ argues against the very loose understanding of the grounds for divorce among the Jews by appealing to the original institution of marriage. At the creation God made only *one* male (Adam) and *one* female (Eve). These two were joined together in marriage by God. It is clear that Jesus viewed Genesis 2:24 (in combination with Gen. 1:27) as a creation ordinance.³⁵ Our Lord viewed the creation of Adam and Eve and their union in marriage as literal, historical events that set the proper biblical pattern for all subsequent marriage relationships.

If one does not accept the historicity of Adam, then one is left with only two alternatives regarding Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:6-8. One can argue that Christ was merely human and was simply mistaken when He regarded Adam as a literal, historical, first created man. In other words, Jesus

³³George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 144.

³⁴J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, 1960), p. 68.

³⁵Creation ordinances are ethical norms which are based upon the work of God in creation. They “depict ‘the constitution of things’ as they were intended to be from the Creator’s hand. They cover and regulate the whole gamut of life: bearing children, superintending the earth as a responsible steward before and under God, responsively ruling the creatures of all creation, finding fulfilment and satisfaction in work, labor, resting on the Sabbath, and enjoying marriage as a gift from above” (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Old Testament Ethics* [Grand Rapids, MI: Academic Books, 1983], p. 31).

was finite, limited in knowledge and subject to errors in judgment just like everyone else. This view is blatantly unscriptural, anti-Christian and wicked. Another approach is to argue that Jesus was accommodating Himself to the culture and society in which He lived. He knew that the Scriptures were full of mistakes, lies and myths, but He *pretended* they were inerrant because He didn't want to upset His first century audience. These arguments (which are typical examples of Modernist unbelief) must emphatically be rejected by all professing Christians. The idea that Jesus Christ (who is God [Mt. 1:23; Jn. 1:1-3, 14; Rom 9:6], who cannot lie [Tit. 1:2; Heb. 6:18], who is omniscient [Heb. 4:13; Rom. 11:22]) would appeal to a lie, or a myth, or to a redaction of evil, con artist priests to establish a doctrine or ethical teaching and present that teaching as God's word which is absolutely true, is an explicit denial of Christianity. If Jesus was *unaware* of the mythological nature of the creation account or purposely lied to the people (to cater to erroneous Jewish teachings regarding Adam), then He could not be the Messiah or the Son of God. A Jesus who was not God, who was a lying, sinful man cannot be an atonement for the sins of the elect. One must either believe the words of Christ or cast Christianity aside. There is no middle ground on this issue.

Conclusion

The biblical evidence for the historicity of Adam is so clear, abundant and interwoven with the teaching of Paul and Christ that it is impossible to circumvent this teaching without also redefining and rejecting the doctrines of Christ and the gospel. The literal, historical understanding of the account of Adam and his fall is rejected today not because of the biblical or even the *real* scientific evidence, but because men are unwilling to believe the clear teaching of Scripture. Why are men so willing to abandon the word of God in favor of speculative theories that are founded only upon human opinion? The answer lies in the fact that many people are unwilling to lay down the weapons of their warfare and submit to Christ. Men do not want to face the reality of sin and its consequences, death and hell. Men regard the early chapters of Genesis as myth, legend, saga and so forth in order to retain human autonomy. They want to define for themselves what is good and what is evil. Such men are on the broad path that leads to destruction. Bible-believing Christians are not taken in by such rubbish. They know that Adam was just as real as they are. They also know that Jesus Christ, the second Adam, the covenant head of redeemed humanity has conquered Satan, sin and death. "But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death

reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)” (Rom. 5:15-17).

The Doctrine of Creation and it's Significance

INTRODUCTION

The doctrine of creation presents a problem for apologetics at the outset: How may such an idea as the biblical account of origins be defended or advanced in the face of the monolithic and scientifically sophisticated superstructure of modern science, dominated as it is by evolutionary theories? There is little doubt that the view predominates in our society, at both scientific and pre-scientific levels, that purely naturalistic evolutionary processes account for the origin and development of the universe, covering thousands of millions of years. God has more or less been excluded from the picture and Biblical creation according to Genesis chapters I and 2 is dismissed as an outmoded concept. Evolution, in one form or another, is modern man's starting point, his basic datum in his view of reality. From a Christian point of view, however, based upon the Bible as the reliable and wholly trustworthy Word of God, evolution must be regarded as one of the great illusions of the epoch. Even a non-Creationist author like Michael Denton could say:

"The influence of evolutionary theory on fields far removed from biology is one of the most spectacular examples in history of how a highly speculative idea for which there is no really hard scientific evidence can come to fashion the thinking of a whole society and dominate the outlook of an age... Ultimately the Darwinian theory of evolution is no more nor less than the great cosmogonic myth of the twentieth century. "¹

Science in general therefore, does pose a problem, though not all scientists Christians and non-Christians, accept such naturalistic theories of origins. There is probably a growing number of academic scientists pursuing scientific work from the presuppositions of a Biblical view of origins².

In many respects the idea of evolution has been a convenient dogma for post-enlightenment man, seeking as he has done to explain the cosmos without reference to God or supernatural revelation. Clearly this takes us into the realm of world-views, which inevitably are based on a heart-commitment, however rationally or empirically coherent they may claim to be. Specifically, a person's cosmology (view of the universe as a whole), and cosmogony (view of the origin of the cosmos) will be derived from their presuppositions or world-view. Basically that will be one of two competing antithetical positions: either a belief

in the living God and His revelation in Scripture; or, belief in a "god" of man's own devising, some absolutist aspect of created reality. It makes all the difference whether or not the scientist believes in the living God revealed in Scripture and through His creation.

There is, then, a fundamental antithesis in the under understanding of reality. This arises because man is a fallen creature (cf Gen.3; Eccles. 7:29). The difference is that the Christian has become, by the grace of God, a "new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17; cf Gal. 6:15) and "by faith" understands "that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Heb. 11:3; cf Rev. 4:11), whereas the unbeliever is in "darkness" (Ps. 107:10; cf John 12:46) and "receiveth not the things of the spirit of God...neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14; cf Rom 8:5). The outlook of these two categories is therefore antithetical.

What is at issue, therefore, is man's basic faith-commitment, and not so much the "raw" data of science, important as that is to understand accurately in connection with man's commission to subdue the earth (cf Gen. 1:26,28). The latter will inevitably determine his outlook on reality and will influence his "interpretation" of so-called scientific "facts." This article will not deal with scientific information. The main purpose is simply to outline the Biblical doctrine of creation and to bring out some of its importance and significance.

THE FACTS OF CREATION

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth..." (Gen. 1:1). These well-known words introduce us to the revelation of God in Scripture. On the question of origins we are dependent upon God's revelation for information. There were, after all no human witnesses (cf Job. 3 8:4)! Only the creator can tell us the facts of creation. We simply receive this truth 'by faith' (Heb. 1 1:3). In a day when science is thought of as being omniscient, and when scientific achievements and technological developments abound, it is salutary to be reminded of this humbling truth: God alone is sovereign, and human existence - our very breath (cf Acts 17:25) - derives from and depends upon Him. Much great work has been done, but only because of the structure and order of a world given meaning and function by "God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth."

God is the originator of all physical (and spiritual) reality (John 1:3). He is Himself an non-created being and has an non-derived existence, independent from and above His creation (Ps. 90:2). He enjoys perfect complacency within the eternal counsels of the Holy Trinity (cf John 17:5). Therefore, to His creatures belongs the exercise of reverent adoration of their creator (I Chron.

16:23-36; Ps. 95:6; Rev. 19: 1 0); belief in His truth (2 Thess. 2:13; John 8:32; cf. Eph. 5:9); and the practice of godliness (I Tim. 2:2; 4:8; 6:13; cf Jas. 1:23; 2:14).

As to the facts of creation the first chapter of Genesis provides the following basic information, from which important considerations arise:

The Power of God (Psalm 62:11)

In the opening chapter of Genesis we are told that God "spoke" or "called", "made" or "created." As a result material things came into existence, either immediately, or, where previously created materials were used, mediately (as, for example, in the formation of man "out of the dust of the ground" (Gen. 2:7, cf verse 19)). The origination of all things was thus the result of the direct exercise of divine sovereign power. It was a divine fiat, creation by divine decree. This is the use Paul makes of the doctrine of creation in the letter to the Romans when he says that "the invisible things of him (i.e. God) from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (1:20).

The Westminster Confession of Faith (hereafter WCF) states this truth with characteristic Scriptural clarity: "It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom and goodness, in the beginning to create, or make of nothing, the world ... t, (IV, 1).

The Suddenness of Creation (Genesis 1:3)

This is implicit in the idea of fiat creation, but warrants emphasis, especially in view of the prevailing evolutionary theories of the origin and development of the universe. This is not a mere 'big bang', rather it is a purposeful and decisive creative act. When God "spoke" (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 29), 'made' (1:7, 16, 25), or "created" (1:21, 27), the things which He purposed came to pass immediately. This carries with it, of course, the implication of the maturity of the things called into being - an important concept to bear in mind in connection with geological dating variables. As Dr J.C. Whitcomb put it: "There could be no genuine creation of any kind, without an initial appearance of age inherent in it"⁴. In assessing the age of the universe sufficient account must be taken of such a factor. This is not saying, of course, that the creation included fossils. That is a different matter altogether.

There is an analogy here with some miracles of the New Testament. For example, the first miracle performed by the Lord - at Cana of Galilee - saw Jesus turn water into wine (John 2: 1 -1 1). The ruler of the Feast clearly believed that

the best, that is to say, the most mature wine had been kept till last. In point of fact it had only been 'created' a few minutes earlier. To underline this point about the suddenness of creation, the Psalmist writes: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made ... for he spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. 33:6, 9). There is no reason at all to dismiss a 'young earth' or 'recent creation' view of origins.

The Comprehensiveness of Creation (Acts 17:24)

This follows logically from the fact of creation *ex nihilo* (i.e. "out of nothing"). Everything in the universe, "whether visible or invisible" (WCF, IV, 1), owes its existence to the divine will. The comprehensiveness of creation is brought out strikingly by the apostle Paul writing to the Colossians: "...by him (Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him. " (1: 16).

There is, however, an orderliness in creation. This much is clear from the Genesis narrative. We are told that creation was the work of "six days" (cf Ex. 20:1 1; 31:17). The very pattern of man's weeks - six days labour and one day's rest - and the demarcation of his weeks by the sabbath day, derives from the pattern of God's creative activity. There is no reason at all to dismiss a "literal" view of these six creative days. Without question it was possible for the Lord thus to create the world, and it would seem strange for the Lord to describe the creation period in these terms if He meant millions or thousands of millions of years (with "chance" and random occurrences), as the evolutionary schemes would require.

In Genesis 1 every basic constituent of the material universe is brought before our view. God is not merely the creator of "substance" in general but specifically of "light and darkness" (3, 4); "waters" and "firmament" (i.e., expanse) (6); "dry land" and "seas" (9, 10); plant life (11, 12); stars, sun and moon (14, 16); birds (20); sea creatures (21); animals (24); and, finally, the capstone, so to speak, man himself (26, 27; cf Gen. 2:7; Ps. 8:5, 6). From the initial formlessness God wrought order, comprehensively (cf Gen 1:2 with 2: 1).

The Perfection of Creation (Psalms 104:24)

At every stage in the work of creation God reflected upon the works of His hands and expressed satisfaction as to the end result. Six times in the first chapter of Genesis the phrase "and God saw that it was good" is used to describe what had been created. This is predicated of the third day (10, 12), the fourth day (18), of the fifth day (21), and of the sixth day (25, 31). In verse 31 the statement is made: "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very

good." This is clearly a reflection on the whole period of creation. Man himself was made with "knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His (i.e., God's) own image" (WCF, IV, 2; cf Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24).

This is an important consideration in the light of the implications of the normal evolutionary chronology of earth's history. According to the Bible (Rom. 5:12) suffering and death did not enter into the world until the "fall" of man into sin (cf Gen. 3: 1; I Cor. 15:2 1). But the evolutionary geological time scale involves the presence of death and destruction on a widespread and violent scale in all ages before the supposed emergence of "modern man" (*homo sapiens*). The fossil record itself supposedly illustrative of evolutionary progress and a key to the classification of geological ages, implies this. But this is clearly inconsistent with the Biblical cosmogony, which presupposes that before the fall of man everything God made was "very good" and there was no death (cf Rom. 5:14). Thus, as Dr Henry M. Morris has succinctly put it:

"The Bible-believing Christian must realize that, if he accepts the geological ages system, he is implicitly accepting the whole evolutionary package which is synonymous with it. He is accepting the billion-year reign of suffering and death in the world, including the death of man such as *Homo erectus* and Neanderthal Man, who lived and died long before Adam, if the evolutionary chronology is right"⁵.

Morris's suggested "solution" is straightforward: the fossil record, being a record of sudden destruction of life and not at all a record of gradual evolution of life, must have been formed after the fall of man into sin, probably for the greater part at least at the the of the cataclysmic world-wide flood described in Genesis, chapters 6 to 9. As Peter confirms: "The world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished" (2 Pe. 3:6).

THE AGENTS IN CREATION

Creation, as we have seen, is rooted in the divine decrees (cf Ps. 8:3), is a manifestation of divine power (Rev. 4:11), and, was pronounced "very good" on its accomplishment. In addition, it is clear from Scripture that creation was an act of the triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The act of creation provides a clear demonstration of the Trinitarian doctrine.

Creation absolutely an act of God

The work of creation is attributed to the Godhead, the one living and true God, revealed to us in Holy Scripture. This is clear from the Genesis narrative, and also from many other Old Testament passages (cf Deut. 4:32; Ps. 104; Isa. 45:5-19; Mal. 2: 1 0) and also from New Testament passages (cf. Mark 13:19; Acts

17:24; Eph. 3:9; Rev. 10:6). Such references may correctly be taken as referring primarily to the creative activity of God the Father. Specifically, however, we are told that "all things" owe their origin to "God, the Father" (I Cor. 8:6).

Creation through God, the Son

Whilst creation is predicated primarily of God in the unity of His being, there are specific instances of this creative work being accomplished through God, the Son (the Lord Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit. In His incarnation (John 1:14; Phil. 2:6-7) Jesus took human flesh, without sin (Phil. 2:5-8; I Peter 2:22; Heb. 4:15). He was "sent" by the Father (John 5:37; 1 John 4:14). But he had existence before His incarnation. This is beautifully brought out in His prayer recorded in John 17: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (v.5). In another place He is recorded as saying: "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58). Specifically, the work of creation is attributed to the Son (cf John 1: 1-5). This is most explicitly brought out in the Letter to the Colossians where we read that it was by the Son that all things "were ... created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1: 16-17). This enlarges on a statement of Paul's elsewhere, that "of him and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory for ever" (Rom. 11:36; cf Heb. 1:2).

The Spirit in Creation

The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14), "eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son" (WCF, II, 3; cf John 15:26). He too is active in creation. The first indication of this is given in Genesis chapter 2 where we are told that the 'Spirit of God moved upon [or, hovered over] the waters" (v.1). This is confirmed by such texts as Job 26:13 (cf 33:4) and Psalm 104:30 (cf Ps. 33:6) and Isaiah 40:13.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATION

The Biblical doctrine of creation and the activity of the Triune God in the work of creation have been outlined. What is the importance of this for Christians today? Several considerations arise.

Acknowledgement of the Sovereignty of God

The inescapable implication of the doctrine of creation is the fact of the sovereignty of God. Creation, inevitably, is rooted in divine sovereignty. This doctrine presupposes mighty creative power, something Paul makes crystal clear

to the Romans when he says that "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. 1:20). The fact is, nothing is too hard for the Lord (cf Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:17, 27; Matt. 19:26; Luke 18:27). Creation is the exercise of God's free will. He is "the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy" (Isa. 57:15) and He is the "Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8: 1).

Though the Lord God is high above the earth, though He is not contained within His creation (Ps. 97:9; cf Eph. 1:21-23; Isa. 66: 1; Acts 7:48-50), He also works within creation to uphold it. He is near to His people (Ps. 34:18; 145:18), and has respect for the lowly (Ps. 138:6). Although sin has come between man and his Maker (Isa. 59:2; Gen. 3), in God's gracious redemption in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17; cf Gal. 6:15) His people's sins are forgiven (Ps. 85:2; Eph. 4:32; 1 John 2:12). How unspeakably marvellous this is! That the transcendent, omnipotent and holy creator (Jer. 23:23) should condescend to His creatures whom He chooses and save them from their sins out of His pure mercy and grace (2 Chron. 30:9; Ps. 103:8; Joel 2:13; Eph. 1:4-7). "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. 19:6)! On the other hand for those who do not know the Lord there is only a certain looking for of judgment (Heb. 10:27). It is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God (v.31).

Creation is the basis of all true knowledge

The doctrine of creation is a pillar of the Christian faith (Heb. 11:3). It is a fundamental tenet of revelation, and therefore a central tenet of the faith (WCF, IV). Without the presupposition of a supernatural creation ex nihilo by the hand of God there cannot be a correct understanding of reality. In a real sense there is no possibility of a correct view of reality, in its origin, unity and diversity, and purpose, without a heart-commitment to the true and living God, revealed in Scripture and creation. (cf Heb. 1 1:6; Ps 8:3). A person's cosmology and cosmogony must be theo-centric or they will be distorted and seriously flawed, to a greater or lesser extent.

The implications of this are far-reaching, covering the whole gambit of knowledge. Just as creation is a basic 'given' of a true cosmology, so also it is the basis of true epistemology (theory of knowledge). This is of vital importance for the believer in Christ. The Christian is able to understand aright through regeneration. As a regenerated person the believer sees reality now with new "spectacles"; from a God-centred view-point. Such a person acknowledges God for whom He is, recognizes His word as true, accepts by faith that God is creator and sustainer, and that nothing is too hard for Him, for He is the Sovereign Lord of this universe who gives it meaning. Where such a perspective is missing there cannot be a really true understanding of the world and man's place in it. Thus,

science, anthropology (study of man), psychology, education, history, or theology (or philosophy) not based upon such a theistic, creationist understanding of reality will be distorted and flawed.

Of course, it is true that unregenerate people can do good work, but only because their anti- or non-theistic viewpoint is mitigated by the fact that they inescapably operate within God's world and to some degree, in order to make "sense" of things, must the structures of creation, that is to say, assume the coherence and God-given meaning of created reality. Men operate unavoidably within the sphere of God's common or temporal-preserving grace. Nevertheless, Christians have to be aware of the tendency of unregenerate man to distort and pervert truth and reality, not least in the area of the meaning and interpretation of "facts". Christians should always examine discerningly and critically the work of unregenerate men, and any thought not based squarely upon the Biblical view of creation.

THE END OF CREATION

The chief end, or purpose of creation is the glory of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God..." (Ps. 19: 1). This truth is very clear in Scripture (cf Rom 16:27; 1 Tim. 1: 1 7; Rom. 1 1:36; Gal. 1:5; Heb. 13:2 1; I Pe. 5:1 1). Similarly with man: "What is the chief end of man?" asks the first question of the Shorter Catechism. "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." In other words, all man's reflection on creation, and work within it, should acknowledge God as Creator and seek to bring glory to Him.

Creation also has its "end" in the sense of termination. Just as God has "stretched out" the world and all that it contains (Isa. 45:5; Ps. 104:2; Zech. 12: 1), so He will "fold" it up (Heb. 1: 12) in due time. He is in control of history and time. There will be an end. This will happen when Jesus comes again for the judgment and consummation. The link between the beginning and end of history is beautifully described in the letter to the Hebrews: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands ... They shall perish...and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up" (Heb. 1: 10- 12; cf Rev. 10:6-7).

Thus, as surely as there was a creation in the beginning there will be a final judgment and consummation of the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ in the end. What will happen then? "A new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea .. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new' (Rev. 21:1, 5).

NOTES

1. Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, Bethesda, Maryland, 1986, p358
2. There are now several associations of Christian academic scientists throughout the world holding to a strongly biblical and creationist perspective. There are the Creation Research Society and the Institute for Creation Research in the USA, the Biblical Creation Society in the UK, and the Creation Science Foundation in Australia. Among attractive, popular and effective publications are *Origins* from the Biblical Creation Society and *Creation Ex Nihilo* from the Creation Science Foundation.
3. By 'evolution' is meant that naturalistic process over time, with chance occurrences, involving random radical and progressive changes to organisms from less to more complex forms. We distinguish this from the (non-evolutionary) small changes, adaptations or diversifications evident within basic created types of organisms or creatures (ie within their 'kinds').
4. J.C. Whitcomb, *The Early Earth*, London, 1972, p30
5. H.M. Morris *The Remarkable Birth of Planet Earth*, Minneapolis, 1972

The Allegory of Creation in Genesis 1

In the Bible, God reveals only selective facts which directly affect our eternal life. The Bible is not a science book, nor is it a history book. For example, the details in Genesis 1 are very selective and very brief, and they are not primarily scientific, although everything revealed is in harmony with the physical sciences.

"In the beginning God created the heaven..." (Gen 1:1). That is, He made the generations of the heavens (as in Gen 2:4). At that time, God created the universe (some might call it the *"Big Bang"*); we can picture the universe bursting forth with indescribable energy so that the stars, planets, comets, interstellar space, etc. filled the universe with trillions of heavenly bodies of incredible variety.

The first verse of the Bible then says, *"[In the beginning God created]... the earth"*; that is, the generations of the earth (again, as in Gen 2:4). From that point forward, God no longer describes the generations of the heavens; this information is closed until it is reopened in the book of Revelation (19:11). In other words, there is a gap to be inferred in Genesis 1:1. From Genesis 1:2 and

onwards, the Bible is specifically related to the *"generations of the earth"* and the main theme is the salvation of mankind.

God chose not to reveal to us how the heavens and the earth were created, probably because very few people would be able to understand the physical process. To this very day, astrophysicists debate the mechanics of the primordial creation — the *"big bang"*, or however we might wish to describe it. Yet throughout Scripture there are thousands of references to the created world and the details revealed are beyond modern scientific reproach.

What God wants us to focus on, however, is the earth as our future inheritance. In the Bible He tells us how we can gain this inheritance. While there are many references to the physical creation, these are secondary to God's primary message:

"But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD"

(Num 14:21). Don't expect all the details of creation or science to be fleshed out in the Bible; references to creation are secondary to the primary message of Scripture, which is the offer of eternal life to all of God's children.

More than just literal

As many have pointed out, there are some oddities in the record:

- There is light (Gen 1:3), yet the sun does not appear until verse 14.
- The sun and moon *"rule"* over day and night (vv 16, 18) as if they were active persons.
- The earth and seas *"bring forth"* flora and fish, yet it was God who created

them. Why? I think it is because there is a message of the plan and purpose of God for humankind interwoven in the Genesis 1 record of creation.

Very briefly we will review each day:

- **The first day:** division of light and darkness. The spiritual meaning: separation of sons of God from sons of men.
- **The second day:** water predominates with separation of waters above from waters below. The spiritual meaning: separation of righteous from the wicked by means of a flood.
- **The third day:** emphasis on oceans, seas, earth and herbs. The spiritual meaning: the earth (Israel) to bring forth fruit amidst a sea of unfruitful

nations; note Genesis 1:9,10: God's purpose is now centered in Israel (i.e., the "land", or "earth").

- **The fourth day:** the atmosphere thins to reveal the universe. Note emphasis of "light" and "lights". The spiritual meaning: Jesus Christ appears to bring righteousness to light. As the heavenly lights now becomes clearly visible, so the Mosaic veil gives way to the full revelation of God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Note that in this "fourth day" (i.e., the fourth millennium?) the greatest of all kings, Jesus Christ, appears — he is the One who will eventually "rule" the earth. The word "rule" appears three times for the events of this day.
- **The fifth day:** first marine, then bird life. The spiritual meaning: the sea is often likened to humankind, which signifies that God is calling out of the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14).
- **The sixth day:** mammals and reptiles (terrestrial life culminating in man). The spiritual meaning: the sixth or final millennium will be characterized by Gentile dominion, but the saints, Jew and Gentile (mankind created in the image of God), prevail and are given immortality and receive power over the nations (cp Gen 1:26,27).

So Genesis 1 tells us that God created our earth, and also that He devised a plan whereby mankind might have the opportunity to respond to its Creator by developing the image and likeness of His holiness and glory. By the way, the word God is translated from the Hebrew word *elohim* (plural). In Psalm 8:6, *elohim* is translated "angels":

"Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels (elohim), and hast crowned him with glory and honor."

We believe that the angels assisted God in the creation process and that, at the direction of the Lord Jesus upon his ascension to heaven, the angels are actively administering the affairs of the world today, especially with respect to the believers. Read Hebrews 2:5 and also note Job 38:1-7: there God declares that He laid the foundation of the earth and, at this time, the "morning stars (the angels) sang together, and all the sons of God (angels) shouted for joy."

From time to time it is helpful to review this approach to Genesis 1 as it teaches not only about God's power in creation, but it also demonstrates His plan for man's salvation.

Apologetics on Christian Denominations and Sects

Roman Catholicism

Where did Catholicism originate from? Isn't Catholicism just another version of Christianity with some minor differences? I thought they both believe in Jesus and God so they are basically the same right? Are we just splitting hairs here? If we just look at today's Catholicism and Christianity, we will be lost. It is best to go back in time to the history of the early Christian and Catholic church. If we can understand all the historical facts and documents, we can then know the truth.

Salvation

First of all, I want to start with the most important and fundamental difference between Christianity and Catholicism; salvation. Let's look at this famous verse:

Romans 10:9-10 – that if thou mayest confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and mayest believe in thy heart that God did raise him out of the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart doth [one] believe to righteousness, and with the mouth is confession made to salvation (YLT)

According to this verse, if you confess with your month and believe that Jesus was God and was resurrected, you will be saved from the lake of fire. It is a free gift. It does not matter what crimes or sins you have committed or will commit in the future. You will be saved from the second death of the lake of fire. And although the lake of fire is harsh and severe, it is not eternal. This is the Christian belief. For Biblical evidence of this, see my article on the lake of fire.

The Catholic belief is that salvation is a long process. They believe that every sin you commit must be forgiven either in this life or after death in purgatory. It is not until God has forgiven you of every sin you committed that you will go to heaven. If you are not forgiven, you will spend eternity in hell. That sounds like a major difference to me. However, a lot of leaders, churches, and time has distorted these two views of salvation. The majority of Christians today believe that salvation is a free gift, but also believe in an eternal hell. To figure out the truth, we have to go back to the early church.

Peter and Paul

After the death of Jesus, Peter and Paul were the main leaders of the church. Peter (1 B.C. – 67 A.D.) was considered to be the first Pope by the Catholic Church, although that title was not invented yet. The Bible contains important accounts of Peter: he was one of Jesus' disciples, he walked on water, Jesus

washed Peter's feet, Peter denied knowing Jesus, he was put in prison by King Herod, but was rescued by an angel (Acts 12). Peter was finally put to death by Nero in 67.

Paul (5 A.D. – 67 A.D.) was initially a Roman citizen with high social status. However, on the road to Damascus he had a vision of Jesus according to Acts 9. This caused him to become a Christian and change his name from Saul to Paul. God gave Paul divine wisdom and knowledge that allowed him to write the majority of the New Testament, including the book of Revelation. Later in life, Paul was in and out of prison several times. He spent around 6 years in prison. Although the details of Paul's death are unknown, his tomb was supposedly found at the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls in Rome, which was announced in 2009.

Antioch, Syria

After Peter and Paul, Christians started to move out of Jerusalem and Israel. Instead of Jerusalem, the three main cities of Christians were Antioch in Syria, Alexandria in Egypt, and Rome in Italy. In Antioch, one of the early bishops was Ignatius, whom I discussed in my article on The Second Coming. His exact birth and death are unknown, but it was around 35.A.D. to 107 A.D. Ignatius is famous for his letters to various groups, including the Ephesians, the Magnesians, the Trallians, the Romans, the Philadelphians, the Smyrnaeans, and to Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna. He is also known for the first use of the Greek word **katholikos**, which means universal, complete, or whole when describing the church:

“Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be; as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic (**katholikos**) Church. It is not lawful to baptize or give communion without the consent of the bishop. On the other hand, whatever has his approval is pleasing to God. Thus, whatever is done will be safe and valid.”
– Letter to the Smyrnaeans, Ignatius

As seen in this quote, the Greek word **katholikos** is where the word “catholic” comes from. This letter lead many scholars to apply the word “catholic” to the church. Although Ignatius did not believe in an eternal hell, he started the development of catholic theology. Look here:

“Take care to do all things in harmony with God, with the bishop presiding in the place of God, and with the presbyters in the place of the council of the apostles, and with the deacons, who are most dear to me, entrusted with the business of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father from the beginning and is at last made manifest” – Letter to the Magnesians 2, 6:1, Ignatius

From this quote, Ignatius liked the idea of having one bishop in charge of one area, such as a city. It seems there were several bishops per church or congregation at the time, and Ignatius wanted one bishop to rule an entire area. So you can see how the church may have adopted this initial idea, which over time evolved into the pope.

Alexandria, Egypt

Another important city of Christianity around this time was Alexandria. One notable Christian theologian in Alexandria was Clement who lived around 150 A.D. to 215 A.D. (not know exactly). He was considered to be the head of the church in Alexandria. He wrote three books about Christianity including the *Protrepticus* ("Exhortation to the Greeks"), the *Paedagogus* ("Instructor"), and the *Stromata* ("Miscellanies"). Here are some quotes from the *Stromata* on the lake of fire:

"Fire is conceived of as a beneficent and strong power, destroying what is base, preserving what is good; therefore this fire is called 'wise' by the Prophets ... We say that the fire purifies not the flesh but sinful souls, not an all-devouring vulgar [earthly, natural] fire, but the 'wise fire' was we call it, the fire that 'pierceth the soul' which passes through it." - *Stromata* VII, 2:5-12, Clement
"saving disciplinary, leading to conversion" - *Stromata* VI, 6, Clement

From these quotes, we can conclude that Clement believed that the lake of fire was not eternal punishment, but a form of purification to convert a non-believer. Clement's predecessor was Origen who lived around 185 A.D. to 254 A.D. Origen spent the last twenty years of his life in Palestine, where a wealthy patron hired six secretaries to help him write some books. Here's a few quotes:

"The Sacred Scripture does, indeed, call our God 'a consuming fire' (Heb. 12:29), and says that 'rivers of fire go before His face' (Dan. 7:10), and that 'He shall come as a refiner's fire and purify the people' (Mal. 3:2,3). As therefore, God is a consuming fire, what is it that is to be consumed by Him? We say it is wickedness, and whatever proceeds from it, such as it figuratively called 'wood, hay, and stubble' (1 Cor. 3:12-15) which denote the evil works of man. Our God is a consuming fire in this sense; and He shall come as a refiner's fire to purify rational nature from the alloy of wickedness and other impure matter which has adulterated the intellectual gold and silver: consuming whatever evil is admixed in all the soul." - *Against Celsus*, IV, 13, Origen

"They are purged with the 'wise fire' or made to pay in prison every debt up to the last farthing [...] to cleanse them from the evils committed in their error [...] Thus they are delivered from all the filth and blood with which they have been

so filthy and defiled that they could not even think about being saved from their own perdition” – *On Prayer*, XXIX, 15, Origen

So we can see that Origen also agreed with Clement. Origen also saw the lake of fire as God’s refinement, cleansing, and purification of evil and sin.

Rome, Italy

After Jesus’ death, Christianity was banned by the Roman empire for 280 years. This is ironic because although it was banned in Rome, Rome also had a large amount of Christians. The Christians in Rome were terribly persecuted during this time. Then in 313 A.D., Constantine (272 A.D. – 337 A.D.), the emperor of Rome, legalized Christianity with the Edict of Milan. In 325 A.D., Constantine assembled the Council of Nicea, in order to unify Christianity. Constantine believed that Christianity could help unify the Roman empire, which was beginning to divide. The council formed the Nicene Creed which was a basic statement of the Christian faith. However, Constantine himself also had Roman pagan beliefs. He also felt that the Roman empire would not accept a full Christian belief system. So he made a mixture of the two, which contained some beliefs that contradicted the Bible. Here are some of the main pagan beliefs:

1. **The Cult of Isis** – an Egyptian based religion which worshiped a mother-goddess, replaced Jesus’ mother Mary, so that Mary was now a figure of worship, with titles such as “Queen of Heaven,” “Mother of God,” and “God-Bearer”

2. **Mithraism** – a popular Roman religion which celebrated a sacrificial meal, eating the flesh and drinking the blood of a bull, so now communion, which Jesus meant to be a symbol of his body and blood, was not converted into Jesus’ ACTUAL body and blood, Mithraism also contain several “sacraments” which were later added to Catholicism

3. **Henotheism** – another popular Roman religion which worships a single supreme god while accepting the existence of other deities such as the gods of Jupiter, Neptune, and several others, so this was adopted into Christianity as worshiping of saints such as St. Paul and St. Peter, even though the Bible says you shall worship God alone (Deut. 6:13)

These adaptations made this new “Christianity” more acceptable to the general public. It is also during this time that many standard Christian practices were established such as using Sunday as the official day of worship, the use of the altar as the focal point of the church, and the sign of the cross. Constantine took the title “Pontifex Maximus” which means highest priest. However, he was NOT a pope. The papacy has still not been established.

Theodosius I

The next important emperor of Rome was Theodosius I (347 A.D. – 395 A.D.) In 380, Theodosius I, along with Gratian and Valentinian II published the Edict of Thessalonica which made Nicene Christianity (Nicene from the creed Constantine made) the official state religion of the Roman Empire. The Edict of Thessalonica also criminalized all other forms of Christianity. This led to the use of capital punishment of non-Nicene Christians. This caused true Christianity to be even more diminished. In 382, the Council of Rome first officially determined what were the acceptable books of the Bible. This list was called the Biblical Canon. In 391, Jerome translated the Bible into Latin. This translation was known as Jerome's Latin Vulgate which I have discussed several times in previous articles. The King James Bible was translated from this Latin Vulgate instead of the original Greek and Hebrew, giving many mistranslations.

Leo I and St. Augustine

Leo I (400 A.D. – 461 A.D.) was an intimidating bishop who wanted to be "Lord of the Whole Church." He declared that any resistance would result in being condemned to eternal hell. Note that the papacy has still not been established. At this time, there were still several bishops who split the authority of the church. In 451, the Council of Chalcedon denied Leo's request, and there was still no pope.

Also during this time, lived St. Augustine (354 A.D. – 430 A.D.) who was a leader in the Latin Christian church. Around 412, he wrote a book called the *City of God*, which argues that the majority of people would be separated from God and go to hell for eternity, while only a few would go to heaven for eternity. The majority of his argument uses reasoning and quotations from Cicero, a Roman lawyer. His only Biblical proof is Matthew 25:46, in which he mistranslates "eternal":

"For Christ said in the very same place, including both in one and the same sentence: 'So these will go into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.' If both are eternal, then surely both must be understood as 'long,' but having an end, or else as 'everlasting' without an end. For they are matched with each other. In one clause eternal punishment, in the other eternal life. (To say) 'Eternal life shall be without end, (but) eternal punishment will have an end' is utterly absurd. Hence, since the eternal life of the saints will be without end, eternal punishment also will surely have no end, for those whose lot it is." – *City of God*, XXI, xxiii, St. Augustine

In my article For Ever – a Mistranslation, I proved that the Greek word **aion** does not mean eternal. Also the Latin words **speculum** and **aeternum** from

Jerome's Latin Vulgate both have double meanings of "unending time" and "a period of time." St. Augustine failed to understand this. It is very likely that Leo I picked up on St. Augustine's teaching of eternal hell and used it to intimidate the government. Note that this is the **FIRST TIME** in history where the concept of an eternal hell was established, about 380 years after Jesus' death. No Christian teachings before this time said this.

Gregory I

Gregory I (540 A.D. - 604 A.D.) was the first bishop of Rome to have a lot of power for which the papacy is now known, but he still was not a pope. In fact, he was against a bishop having too much power. In a letter to Maurice, the Emperor, he said:

"I confidently affirm that who so calls himself, or desires to be called Universal Priest, (Pontifex Maximus), it his pride goes before anti-Christ [...] St. Peter is not called Universal Apostle [...] Far from CHRISTIAN (not Catholic) hearts be that blasphemous name" – letter to Maurice, Gregory I

There is a big controversy over this letter. Catholics argue that just because Gregory said this, it does not mean he was not the pope. But why would he call the pope the anti-Christ if he was the pope himself? Remember that Catholics argue that St. Peter was the first pope. Their main source to argue this is the document called the "Donation of Constantine" which is in our next topic.

The Papacy

The first real pope was Boniface III who coerced the Emperor, Phocas, to give him the title of Universal Bishop, papa, or pope. Although his birth is unknown, he died on November 12, 607 A.D., only nine months after his reign as pope began. However, there was still resistance to the pope having such great authority until around the 9th century. It was around this time that documents known today as the pseudo-Isidorean Decretals appeared. These documents were the most extensive and influential set of forgeries found in Catholicism. They contained fictitious letters written by bishops from Clement I (1st century) all the way to Gregory I. They aimed to defend the power of the pope all the way back to the time of Jesus. The worst document was the Donation of Constantine. This document said that Constantine I supposedly transferred authority over Rome and the western part of the Roman Empire to the pope. This gave the pope reign over lands in Judea, Greece, Asia, Thrace, Africa, and Italy. They even extended the lie by claiming that the papacy were divinely ordained from Jesus Christ. These documents worked because of the increasing power the bishops were having since Constantine. So the pope had great power

because of these documents for centuries which gave great credibility to Catholicism.

It was not until 1440, when a Catholic priest named Lorenzo Valla proved that the Donation of Constantine was forged in his book: *De falso credita et ementita Constantini donatione declamatio*. The evidence included language that was inappropriate for the times they were supposedly written, and also, inconsistent dates. However, Valla's book was placed on the list of banned books, so the Donation was still considered correct. Then in 1588, Caesar Baronius published *Annales Ecclesiastici* which finally admitted the Donation was a forgery.

It was eventually found that the documents had been completed by 847-852 A.D. and that the forgers worked in the ecclesiastical province of Reims, France. There is some evidence to suggest that an abbot of Corbie, Paschasius Radbertus, was one of the people involved, but the identities of all the forgers are still unknown. It is clear, however, that the main editor was very intelligent and knowledgeable for his time.

The Sacraments

We have now determined that Catholicism evolved from a mixture of Christianity, pagan beliefs, and leaders trying to lie their way into gaining political power. How do the sacraments fit into this? Where do they come from? First let's define them. The majority of Christians have two sacraments: baptism and communion. Catholicism has five more. In Christianity, the sacraments are simply outward symbols of commitment, and are not necessary for salvation. In Catholicism, the sacraments must be done to obtain salvation. Here are the definitions:

1. **Baptism** – a priest or pastor pours water on the recipient's head or does a full submersion of the recipient, Christians due to this to publicly show they have been saved, while Catholics due this to remove original sin and start the process of salvation, this is done only once in the recipient's life, and is based on the fact that Jesus baptized people in the Bible

2. **Confirmation** – a priest puts Chrism (oil mixed with balsam and consecrated by the bishop) on the recipient's head, this is the second sacrament to initiate salvation, also only done once in the recipient's life

3. **Eucharist (Communion)** – a priest or pastor prays for bread and wine, and the recipient(s) eat and drink them, Catholics believe the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Jesus, while Christians have mixed views on this, Catholics due this every Sunday, while Christians due this anywhere from once

a year to every Sunday, this is based on the last supper when Jesus did this with his disciples

4. Penance and Reconciliation – done to remove sins of recipient after baptism and confirmation, this is done repeatedly throughout the recipient's life, because salvation is a process in Catholicism, this consists of four elements: Contrition (sincere remorse), Confession to a priest, Absolution by the priest, Satisfaction or Penance

5. Anointing of the Sick – a priest anoints a sick person with blessed oil, bestows grace and forgiveness to the recipient, done to those who are sick, old, or near death

6. Holy Orders – a bishop gives special grace and spiritual power to bishops, priests, or deacons to help with their leadership in the church, this is not required for salvation as not everyone can be a leader

7. Marriage – a priest establishes a permanent bond to spouses sealed by God, usually both parties must be Catholics and have been baptized for this to be valid, this is also not required for salvation

First off, the five Catholic sacraments are not Biblical. They are not required for salvation and are not found anywhere in the Bible. Look at these verses:

Romans 3:22-23 – and the righteousness of God [is] through the faith of Jesus Christ to all, and upon all those believing, -- for there is no difference, for all did sin, and are come short of the glory of God – (YLT)

Romans 3:27-28 – Where this [is] boasting? it was excluded; by what law? of works? no, by a law of faith: therefore do we reckon a man to be declared righteous by faith, apart from works of law. (YLT)

It is clear that only faith is required for salvation, which is a free gift from God. So where did the sacraments come from then? As we discussed in the history of Catholicism, things evolved over time to fit the will of the leaders and the people. Earlier, I mentioned that Mithraism was integrated into Catholicism, which contained sacraments. So it is most likely the five Catholic sacraments were spontaneously started by various churches and were adopted to give the church more credibility and power. However, the sacraments were made official by the Catholic church in the Council of Trent, which we will get to shortly.

Purgatory (*see also previous chapters*)

What is purgatory? The Catholic Encyclopedia defines purgatory in this way:

“Purgatory (Lat., “purgare”, to make clean, to purify) in accordance with Catholic teaching is a place or condition of temporal punishment for those who, departing this life in God’s grace, are, not entirely from venial faults, or have not fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgressions.” – *The Catholic Encyclopedia*

So not only do Catholics believe in an eternal hell and heaven, they believe in purgatory. If you are not good enough to go to heaven, but not bad enough to go to hell, you would go to purgatory. In purgatory, you can finish paying for your sins and eventually get into heaven. Their main proof of this is from this passage:

2 Macabees 7:43-46 - making a gathering [...] sent twelve thousand drachmas of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection (For if he had not hoped that they were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead). And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins.

2 Macabees is not apart of the official Bible. It is apart of the Apocrypha which is a group of books that has questionable authority. The official group of books in the Bible is called the Christian Biblical Cannon. The Catholic church and other denominations of Christianity have went through several variations of what books are in the Cannon and what books are in the Apocrypha. Today, most Christians use the King James Bible or a similar English translation which contains 66 books. Discussion of the history of the Bible is another topic on its own so I will not go any further. Anyway, this passage in 2 Macabees only states that we should pray and make sacrifices to the dead for their sins. Going from this to purgatory is a big jump. Catholics also use verses in the Bible such as Matthew 12:32 and 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 and twist them to fit their purgatory theory. The idea of the lake of fire being God’s purification and restitution is much more valid and believable.

Council of Trent

The Council of Trent consisted of a group that met in twenty-five sessions between December 13, 1545 and December 4, 1563. Their goal was to establish Catholic beliefs including Scripture, Original Sin, Justification, the Sacraments, Mass, and the veneration of saints. One main reason for this was to answer Protestant disputes. Note that every Christian denomination including Protestants have variations of beliefs that do not agree with the pure form of Christianity as set by Jesus Christ. However, I do not want to get into that right now. So the Council released various decrees and affirmations on the official

beliefs. These included affirming the sacraments, purgatory, and using Jerome's Latin Vulgate as the authoritative text of Scripture.

Catholic Church Today

In 2005, the Roman Catholic Church released a document called *The Gift of Scripture*. Here are a few quotes from it:

"We should not expect to find in Scripture full scientific accuracy or complete historical precision" – *The Gift of Scripture*

"Such symbolic language must be respected for what it is, and not to be interpreted literally. We should not expect to discover in this book details about the end of the world, about how many will be saved and about when the end will come." – *The Gift of Scripture*

This document completely negates everything that Catholicism has stood for over its entire history. Catholicism used to pride itself on knowing the conditions for salvation and the validity of the Bible. Now they are saying that both should not be considered fact. From everything we have discussed, it can be concluded that the Roman Catholic Church is simply a means of obtaining power over its people. Their story is very inconsistent from century to century. To those of you that are non-Christians, you might be thinking, if I can't trust the Roman Catholic Church, how can I trust Christianity at all? I would encourage you to read my other articles and decide for yourself the truth about Christianity. Although today's churches and practices might be inconsistent, the Bible itself is consistent from beginning to end.

Mormonism

Mormonism

There are about 14 million followers of Mormonism worldwide. Where did Mormonism start? What are their beliefs? Are they a cult? How does it compare with Christianity? Is there any truth to their ideas?

Joseph Smith

Mormonism was founded by Joseph Smith, Jr. Smith claims that when he was 14 years old, in 1820, God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him while he was praying in the woods. They told him all of the current Christian denominations were incorrect. Three years later, in 1823, Smith claimed that an angel named Moroni appeared to him and told him to translate some golden plates written in reformed Egyptian, supposedly by the angel's father. The angel

told him where to find these plates in a stone box buried in the ground at a hill in Manchester, New York, near Smith's home. There is no evidence for the existence of these plates, but some people claimed to have seen them with their own eyes. It was not until 1827, when Smith "found" the plates and began to translate them into English. In 1830, this was published as the Book of Mormon.

Basically, the Book of Mormon is a narrative of people who traveled from the Middle-East to the Americas. It covers the time period from 600 B.C. to 400 A.D. Like the Bible, it includes the death and resurrection of Jesus, with the addition that Jesus appeared in the Americas after his resurrection. Later, Joseph Smith also wrote his own translation of the Bible, which Mormons also believe to be the word of God. As Mormonism began to grow, Joseph was persecuted by the law. He eventually ended up in jail along with his brother Hyrum in Nauvoo, Illinois. A mob broke into the jail and ended up killing them both.

After Joseph's murder, the Mormon church divided into two groups: one lead by his widow in Missouri which is today now known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS). The other was lead by Brigham Young to Salt Lake City, Utah in 1847, and is still there today.

The Mormon God

The first most important concept about Mormonism is their idea of "God." The Mormon "god" is a supreme being from another world, who now rules our world. Rather than having unlimited power like the God of Christianity, Mormons describe him to have only limited power. This is because they believe that humans have free will and thus can resist god's will. Even many Christians struggle with this concept. Christians tend to view God has an emotional being, who gets happy or sad based on our choices. This is illogical, because if God were dependent on our choices, He would not have unlimited knowledge and power. For more on this, see my article on predestination. Anyway, Mormons also believe that god is married to a woman from his old world, who is also a supreme being. Then god and his wife had many children. The first was Jesus, followed by Satan, and then the rest of us. All of their children were born as spirits at first, but later came down to Earth and were reborn as humans. However, god cursed Satan and his followers so that they could not be reborn as humans.

"We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see. These are incomprehensible ideas to some, but they are simple. It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the Character of God, and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another, and that he was once a man like us; yea, that God the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the

same as Jesus Christ himself did, and I will show it from the Bible” – Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 345-346

Life After Death

The Mormon teachings on life after death are a bit complicated. First off, Mormons understand that hell and forever are mistranslations in the Bible. They also understand that the Bible talks about God’s elite overcomers. (See my articles on these topics) Therefore, they have come up with a theory that accounts for these inconsistencies in Christianity. Here is the theory:

After Death

1. return as a spirit into the spirit world into a) paradise or b) prison based on salvation
2. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ
3. Christ will rule for 1,000 years
4. The Great Day of Judgment
5. based on judgment, you will enter one of three levels of heaven: a) celestial kingdom, b) terrestrial kingdom, c) telestial kingdom, or d) eternal hell

Salvation

What are the Mormon requirements for salvation and entrance into heaven? This is where Mormonism has a lot of holes and problems. First of all, being saved in Mormonism means to be saved from prison in the spirit world and later entering the celestial kingdom in heaven. According to the Book of Mormon:

2 Nephi 25:23 - For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do.

So it is by grace we are saved, AFTER we do all we can do? What does that mean? The Bible is much more clear:

Ephesians 2:8-9 – for by grace ye are having been saved, through faith, and this not of you – of God the gift, not of works, that no one may boast; (YLT)

The Bible clearly states that no works on our part are necessary for salvation. However, Mormons disagree with this. Here is another quote from their doctrine:

“And again we bear record – for we saw and heard, and this is the testimony of the gospel of Christ concerning them who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just – They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his

name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given – That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power; And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.” – *Doctrine and Covenants* 76:50-53

In this quote Mormons say that salvation requires understanding of Jesus’ testimony, baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, and overcoming your problems with faith. Sure these are all good things that can be apart of the Christian life. However, they are not NECESSARY for salvation. Next, they give mixed messages about how Jesus is involved in salvation. They claim that his death and resurrection allows salvation to be possible, but look at this:

“There is not a man or woman , who violates the covenants made with their God, that will not be required to pay the debt. The blood of Christ will never wipe that out, your own blood must atone for it” – Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3, p. 247

So the blood of Christ does not pay for our sins? But according to the Bible:

Romans 5:8-9 – and God doth commend His own love to us, that in our being still sinners, Christ did die for us; much more, then having been declared righteous now in his blood, we shall be saved through him from the wrath; (YLT)

To top it all off, they also claim that Joseph Smith’s consent is required for one to be saved. Where did this come from?

“No salvation without accepting Joseph Smith” – *Doctrine of Salvation*, 1:189

“No man or woman in the dispensation will ever enter into the celestial kingdom of god without the consent of Joseph Smith” – Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, vol 7:289

There is no scripture in either the Book of Mormon or the Bible to back this up.

The Terrestrial Kingdom

Those that are not saved can still enter the “Terrestrial Kingdom.”

“Behold, these are they who died without law; And also they who are the spirits of men kept in prison, whom the Son visited, and preached the gospel unto

them, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh; Who received not the testimony of Jesus in the flesh, but afterwards received it. These are they who are honorable men of the earth, who were blinded by the craftiness of men. These are they who receive of his glory, but not of his fulness. These are they who receive of the presence of the Son, but not of the fulness of the Father. Wherefore, they are bodies terrestrial, and not bodies celestial, and differ in glory as the moon differs from the sun. These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God. – *Doctrine and Covenants* 76:72-79

So the terrestrial kingdom is basically for people who accept the gospel of Christ after death, in the spirit world. In the spirit world, those that were saved will witness in to those that are in prison. Some will then come to believe and know Christ during this time. The concept of the terrestrial kingdom is the Mormon's answer to God's law of Jubilee and the restoration of all things. The concept is Biblical, but their explanation is incorrect. Again, refer to my article on the Barley Overcomers for details on this.

The Telestial Kingdom

The lowest level of heaven is the telestial kingdom, as described here:

“And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one; for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one from another in glory in the telestial world; [...] But received not the gospel, neither the testimony of Jesus, neither the prophets, neither the everlasting covenant. Last of all, these all are they who will not be gathered with the saints, to be caught up unto the church of the Firstborn, and received into the cloud. These are they who are the liars, and sorcerers, and adulterers, and whoremongers, and whosoever loves and makes a lie. These are they who suffer the wrath of God on earth. These are they who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. These are they who are cast down to hell and suffer the wrath of Almighty God, until the fulness of times, when Christ shall have subdued all enemies under his feet, and shall have perfected his work; When he shall deliver up the kingdom, and present it unto the Father, spotless saying: I have overcome and have trodden the wine-press alone, even the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. Then shall he be crowned with the crown of his glory, to sit on the throne of his power to reign forever and ever.” – *Doctrine and Covenants* 76:98-103

According to this passage, the telestial kingdom is for those that reject the gospel, are liars, sorcerers, and adulterers. They will suffer in “eternal” fire but later will be delivered by Christ and reign with Him “forever.” This is clearly contradictory. Remember that “eternal” has no beginning nor end. What does the Bible have to say about this?

Revelation 21:8 – and to fearful, and unsteadfast, and abominable, and murders, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all the liars, their part [is] in the lake that is burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (YLT)

Revelation says that this group of liars and sorcerers will suffer in the lake of fire, which is the second death. This is spiritual death which is neither “forever” nor “eternal” (This also found in the Islamic Faith, there is a way out from hell.). Again, Mormons are trying to account for the inconsistency of an “eternal hell” in Christianity by creating this idea of the telestial kingdom. However, both Mormons, and most Christians are incorrect.

Sons of Perdition

Finally, for those that do not make it into any of the three levels of heaven; they will suffer in eternal hell. Mormons refer to these people as the “sons of perdition.”

“Thus saith the Lord concerning all those who know my power, and have been made partakers thereof, and suffered themselves through the power of the devil to be overcome, and to deny the truth and defy my power – They are they who are the sons of perdition, of whom I say that it had been better for them never to have been born; For they are vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God, with the devil and his angels in eternity; - *Doctrine and Covenants* 76:31-33

The actual “son of perdition” comes from the Greek word **apolelia**. In the King James version of the Bible, **apoleila** is translated as perdition 8 times, destruction 5 times, waste 2 times, damnable 1 time, and pernicious 1 time. The best example of the use of this word is in Revelation:

Revelation 17:8 – The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition (**apolelia**). And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (KJV, comment added)

John uses the word **apolelia** to refer to the beast. Matthew, Mark, and Paul also use **apolelia** to refer to this same concept of the beast. The beast is any group of people against the Kingdom of God.

Celestial Marriage

Mormons also believe that being married in this world is separate from being married in the celestial kingdom. See this passage:

“Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world.” – *Doctrine and Covenants* 132:15

So a normal marriage in this world will be nullified after death. However, through the Mormon church, men and women may undergo “sealing” in which they will be married in the celestial kingdom after death. This is controversial because men are allowed to be “sealed” to multiple women. Women, however, are only allowed to be sealed to one man, until after death, when they can also have multiple partners. There has been many arguments both between Mormons themselves and non-Mormons whether or not this is considered polygamy.

There are two important issues here. One is the fact that people can be “sealed” in this world for the spiritual world. The spiritual world is beyond the physical world. It is beyond our physical bodies and time. We have no idea what relationships will be like in heaven and therefore any ideas we may have of “marriage” there has no basis. The second issue is that the Bible clearly states that being with multiple partners is wrong in this world. So if its wrong in this world, why would it be fine in the spiritual world? As spirits, we will have less sin and be more pure of heart. Polygamy would be a step in the opposite direction. It just doesn’t make any sense.

Becoming gods

Since the Mormon “god” is simply a supreme being from another world, Mormons believe humans can become gods as well. Look at their doctrine:

“Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; they shall be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.” – *Doctrine and Covenants* 132:20

This is neither Biblical or Christian. And again everlasting means no beginning or end. So one cannot “become a god” that is everlasting.

Changes to the Book of Mormon

Like many other religions, Mormonism is filled with inconsistencies. Over the years, there were many changes to the Book of Mormon. Here are some examples comparing the 1830 edition to more current editions:

1 Nephi 11:21 – And the angel said unto me, behold the Lam of God, yea even the Eternal Father. Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw? (1830)

1 Nephi 11:21 – And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God yea, even the **Son of** the Eternal Father! Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw? (1931)

1 Nephi 19:20 – For behold, I have workings in the spirit, which doth weary me even that all my joints are weak, for those who are at Jerusalem; for had not the Lord been merciful, to show unto me concerning them, even as he had prophets of old; (1830)

1 Nephi 19:20 – For behold, I have workings in the spirit, which doth weary me even that all my joints are weak, for those who are at Jerusalem; for had not the Lord been merciful, to show unto me concerning them, even as he had prophets of old, **I should have perished also.** (1964)

Mosiah 21:28 – And now Limhi was again filled with joy on learning from the mouth of Ammon the king Benjamin had a gift from God, whereby he could interpret such engravings; yea, and Ammon also did rejoice. (1830)

Mosiah 21:28 – And now Limhi was again filled with joy on learning from the mouth of Ammon the king **Mosiah** had a gift from God, whereby he could interpret such engravings; yea, and Ammon also did rejoice. (1964)

Note that these are not simply changes to adapt to current English like translations of the Bible. They completely change the meaning of these verses. Changing a name in a verse is a pretty big change.

Conclusion

Mormonism is basically a spin-off of Christianity. Its beliefs are based on their own version of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants. It is a cult because you have to join their congregation in order to obtain salvation. However, you do not need to join to enter heaven (the lower levels). Their strange beliefs come from the fact that hell, eternal, and the overcomers are misinterpreted in most Christian denominations. As a Christian, it is important

to know why each particular belief of Mormons is wrong. For the most part, they simply have incorrect interpretations of the Bible.

Scientology

What is Scientology? Is it actually a religion? How many people actually follow it? What do their free stress tests actual measure? Why are there so many celebrities that follow Scientology? Is it a cult?

Dianetics

As usual, I will start with the history. L. Ron Hubbard founded Scientology in the early 1950s. He coined this term based on the Latin word *scientia* which means “to know.” In 1951, he wrote a book called *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*. (see picture above) In this book, Hubbard claims that there are three parts to the mind: analytical, reactive, and somatic. Dianetics uses a technique Hubbard calls “auditing” in which a counselor tries to remove the reactive part of the mind to make people more ethical and happy. Although the book was a best-seller, it was met with criticism from organizations such as the Journal of the American Medical Association as well as Newsweek. They said it was completely unscientific.

How It Became a Religion

In 1952, Hubbard decided to use Dianetics to form a religion, and formed churches in California. This quickly spread throughout the United States, Britain, Ireland, and South Africa. However, the IRS did not recognize Scientology as a religion and thus it had very few members for many years. After many years of legal battles, Scientology was finally recognized by the IRS as a religion in 1993. Other countries then followed suit, including Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, and Taiwan. Countries that still refuse to recognize Scientology include Canada, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and Greece. Today, their church claims that they have millions of members, but this seems to be a false claim in order to pressure people into buying their products. Based on surveys by the U.S. Census Bureau and the American Religious Identification Survey, there is only actually about 10,000 people in the United States that consider themselves members.

Clearwater, Florida

In the 1970s, Hubbard came up with a plan called “Project Normandy” which included plans to infiltrate the city, government, and media of Clearwater. 90,000 pages of documents for this project were found in 1977 by the FBI, and criminal chargers ensued. However, Scientology survived and grew in

Clearwater. As of 2006, they own approximately \$50 million worth of property in Clearwater.

Kids that grow up in Clearwater are very sheltered and follow strict rules every day. They are enrolled in private schools run by Scientologists. There are cameras everywhere throughout the city like in the book 1984. They are taught that illness is all psychological and medicine is not needed. They believe that they are actual immortal beings that are continuously reborn for trillions of years. They grow up believing that auditing is a normal and healthy part of life. Followers pay anywhere from \$60 per hour for introductory auditing sessions to \$700 per hour for advanced sessions. This sounds more like a business than a religion.

Stress Test

The free “Stress Test” you see everywhere is a gimmick used to get people introduced to Scientology. It uses Hubbard’s electropsychometer (E-meter) which is a device that measures electric current. He claimed that this device measures stress and can be used to aid in auditing. In reality, it will measure any changes in blood flow, hormone release, and neurotransmitters which occur all the time in normal people. A “counselor” will try to ask you questions about stressful relationships and situations in your life; then claim that the E-meter is picking up on the physical “stress” that this is causing your body. The counselor will then recommend that you buy Dianetics and a Scientology starter kit containing CDs and workbooks. For your own knowledge, the best physical measurement of stress is from the hormone cortisol, which increases storage of sugar, increases blood pressure, decreases immunity, and decreases inflammation. A blood test is needed to measure this, not some galvanometer wanna be medical device.

In fact, in 1963 the FDA took this device to court because it was not a proven medical device. The judge ruled that the device must have a visible label on it saying: “This E-meter is not medically or scientifically useful for diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of any disease. It is not medically or scientifically capable of improving the health or bodily functions of anyone.” 50 years have passed, yet these stress test booths still claim that the E-meters are legit and fail to have visible labels. They also ignore providing warnings on their web sites, graphic materials, etc. This is simply a scam that targets the misinformed.

The church

If you are wondering what would happen if you went to an actual Scientology church, here is what you can expect. First of all, they will present Scientology as practical self-help. Rather than talking about religion, they will say that

Scientology has helped people with bad relationships, addictions, cured psychological disorders, and even cancer. They then will claim that Scientology contains all of the correct scientific and medical knowledge that the rest of the world does not know about. They will use videos and free seminars to tell you all of this. Then a greeter will try to encourage you with non-threatening questions like “Tell me about yourself, what made you interested in Scientology?” Then the greeter will then tell you about Dianetics and a starter kit that you can purchase. At some point they will ask you to take an Oxford Capacity Analysis (OCA) which is a 200 question Scientology personality test. Then they will offer you free auditing so that you will come back another day.

When you come back for auditing, they will say something like “based on your OCA you are far below normal and need Life Repair.” This involves blocks of 12.5-hour audition “intensives” which cost around \$1,000 each. They will also recommend going through Purification Rundown which costs around \$2,000. This program combines exercise, supplements of vitamin B3 (Niacin), and long sauna sessions for a period of five weeks.

You can see how this may be very appealing to people that are looking for some kind of meaning in their life. The staff will come off as very warm and friendly, if you look past the big price tag.

Project Celebrity

Why do so many today celebrities follow Scientology? The reason for this dates back to 1955. In 1955, Hubbard published an article titled “Project Celebrity” in the Scientology Ability newsletter. The article listed out 63 well-known celebrities including athletes, actors, artists, writers, and singers including Walt Disney, Ernest Hemmingway, and Pablo Picasso. This list was known as the “quarry.” Hubbard requested current followers to bring these celebrities in for auditing. Recruiting celebrities would help spread Scientology, just as how businesses today use celebrities in commercials to increase their sales. Hubbard also offered a reward for this:

“If you bring one of them home you will get a small plaque as your reward.” – Hubbard, Ability, 1955.

Celebrities themselves were also given incentives to join. They were given free courses, could advance quicker in the hierarchy, and could attend special churches known as “celebrity centers.” Today, the appeal to celebrities still stands. They are given VIP treatment similar to those in Las Vegas. They can also afford the more “advanced” auditing sessions. Being a part of Scientology makes celebrities feel more elite and affluent. Instead of following a religion of common people such as Catholicism, they are following a religion that is for the

“higher class.” In reality, this was just another smart marketing scheme, just like the “free stress test.”

Clear

Scientology has a hierarchy of followers. A “clear” is someone who understands the basics of Scientology. They supposedly have freed their mind from unwanted emotions and trauma. They have rid themselves of the “reactive” part of the mind.

Operating Thetan

The next level after clear is Operating Thetan or OT. Hubbard described this stage as “knowing and willing cause over life, thought, matter, energy, space, and time (MEST).” There are eight known levels of OT, and possibly more than that. At OT III, you learn the “secrets of the universe.” To rise in levels, you must pay fees, which appeals to celebrities. Actors such as Tom Cruise and Kristie Alley are OT VII.

Xenu

In 1995, the Scientology “secrets of the universe” were published by a formal member. They claim that 75 million years ago, an evil warlord named Xenu controlled 76% of the planets, but they were overpopulated. So, Xenu transported 13.5 trillion beings to Earth, where they were killed in volcanoes. Their souls were then caught in electronic traps in the atmosphere where they were implanted with false ideas about Christianity. These souls were then born as humans but are still trapped. The goal of Scientology is to wake people up and save them from this trap. This story is so ridiculous that even South Park (tv show) made fun of them.

Gold Base

The international headquarters of Scientology is located on a 500 acre parcel of land in unincorporated Riverside, California (see picture above). It is known as Gold Base. This is where Golden Era Productions makes Scientology’s videos, training films, E-meters, and CDs. The property has a King Arthurish round table, a three mast rudderless clipper ship, pool with mermaid figurines, corporate suites, an estate house known as the Castle, and a carriage house building known as the Tavern.

Sea Organization

The Sea Organization is a group of followers who pledge a “billion-year commitment.” They dedicate their lives to Scientology by living on a ship named the Freewinds, based in the Caribbean (see picture above). It is here that they teach how to be an OT VIII, the highest level of Scientology. Sea Org members may marry one another, but are not permitted to marry outside the organization. Also, having children is frowned upon. Women are pressured into having abortions. If a couple does decide to have a child, they must leave the Sea Org for at least six years to raise the child, before they are allowed to come back.

Ethics

Similar to other cults, a member may be excommunicated if they start to disagree with too many things in Scientology. The ex-member is then labeled as a “Potential Trouble Source” or PTS. All of the person’s loved ones must stay away from them if they want to remain in the church. Mike Rinder, former Executive Director in the Office of Special Affairs, left the church of Scientology after nearly 50 years. His wife and children stayed in the church, and refuse to have any contact with him.

Another troubling program Scientology has is the “Rehabilitation Project Force.” This is for Sea Org members who have become unproductive and strayed from the church’s codes. Chuck Beatty, a former Sea Org member, spent seven years in the RPF facilities in Southern California from 1996 to 2003. He had to endure hard physical labor and was accused of being “disloyal.” “My idea was to go to the RPF for six or eight months and then rough out,” says Beatty. “I thought that was the honorable things to do.” Chuck was given a “partner,” who was responsible for making sure he didn’t escape. “It’s a prison system,” he says explaining that he was watched 24/7. There are many more stories similar to this, but I will refrain from talking about them to protect the those individuals.

Matthew 10:35-39 – For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. (ESV)

Conclusion

Scientology is basically a cult that preys on people's lack of knowledge and takes their money. Once a person has devoted significant time to it, it becomes very hard to leave because so many relationships are at stake. They will make you feel like you are betraying them. It is even worse for kids who have grown up around Scientology, such as in Clearwater. They don't know any other life, and thus it is very hard for them to leave it.

Matthew 7:15-16 - Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheeps clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? (ESV)

The Bible warns us of false prophets just like Scientology. Scientology claims to have the answers, but their story does not check out. Many former members can testify to this. For further reading on this, try *Inside Scientology* by Janet Reitman, *Going Clear* by Lawrence Wright, and *The Church of Fear* by John Sweeney.

Jehovah's Witness

What is the origin of Jehovah's Witness? Are they a religion or a cult? What books and publications do they use? What do they believe? What's the difference between them and Christianity?

Charles Taze Russell

Let's start with the foundation of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916) started his own Bible class when he was eighteen in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He did not agree with an eternal hell, the deity of Christ, or the Holy Spirit. In 1879, he began co-publishing *The Herald of the Morning* magazine with its founder, N. H. Barbour. In 1884, Russell controlled the publication and renamed it to *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*. The same year he also founded Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society (now known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society). Russell claimed that he alone understood the Bible and only his interpretations were correct. Today, the Watchtower Society claims only they can interpret the Bible, and individuals cannot:

“the Bible is an organizational book and belongs to the Christian congregation as an organization, not to individuals, regardless of how sincerely they may believe that they can interpret the Bible [...] the Bible cannot be properly understood without Jehovah's visible organization in mind” – *The Watchtower*, October 1, 1997, p.587

This claim clearly puts the Jehovah's Witnesses in the cult category. Not only do they require people to join as members, they claim that their organization is the sole source for "truth." The publications of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society include *The Watchtower*, a magazine issued every two weeks, *Awake!*, a monthly magazine, and many books including *New Heavens and a New Earth*, *Make Sure of All Things*, *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, *Aid to Bible Understanding*, *The New World*, *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, *The Truth that Leads to Eternal Life*, *School and Jehovah's Witnesses*, and *Let God Be True*. They also use their own translation of the Bible; the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1961, revised 1984). One of the main changes in this translation is that it translates the Greek word **Kyrios**, as "Jehovah" instead of "Lord" 237 times out of the 748 times it is used in the New Testament. Here are some verses from their translation:

James 1:5 – So, if any one of YOU is lacking wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him. (NWT)

James 3:17 – But the wisdom from above is first of all chaste, then peaceable, reasonable, ready to obey, full of mercy and good fruits, not making partial distinctions, not hypocritical. (NWT)

The Jehovah's Witnesses are being hypocrites by contradicting their own beliefs. In their magazine, they say no one can interpret the Bible, regardless of how sincere they are. However, James says that anyone can obtain wisdom from God directly, and that this wisdom will be pure, impartial, and non-hypocritical.

Who is Jesus?

The Witnesses believe that in the beginning, God's first creation was Michael the archangel who helped create the world. Then, Michael became a man known as Jesus. Jesus was a perfect man, but was not God in the flesh. He then died at the stake, not on the cross. Finally, he was resurrected as a spirit, not as human with a physical body. So if Jesus is not God, should He be worshiped? Here is what Witnesses say:

Yes

"Question: The fact that our Lord received worship is claimed by some to be an evidence that while on earth he was God the Father disguised in a body of flesh and not really a man. Was he really worshiped or is the translation faulty? Answer: Yes, we believe our Lord Jesus while on earth was really worshiped, and properly so [...] It was proper for our Lord to receive worship in view of his having been the only begotten of the Father, and his agent in the creation of all things, including man" – *The Watchtower*, July 15, 1898, p. 216

No

“He taught men, not to worship him, but to worship Jehovah his Father [...] I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God” – *Make Sure of All Things*, 1965, p. 283

Yes

“For example, to which one of the angels did he ever say: ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father?’ And again: ‘I shall be a Father to him, and he will be a Son to me?’ But when he again brings his Freeborn into the inhabited earth, he says: ‘And let all God’s angels worship him,’ – *New Heavens and a New Earth*, 1953, p.27-28

No

“What I learned was so different from what I had heard at the ‘Christian’ school I had attended. Jehovah’s Witnesses do not worship Jesus. Rather, they worship Almighty God, the One that Jesus himself worshiped,” – *Awake!*, Dec. 22, 1987, p. 22

Their publications contradict themselves. Sometimes they say Jesus should be worshiped, and other times they say Jesus should not be worshiped. So, how can we believe an organization that contradicts themselves about such an important topic? This is important because they believe that Jesus was not God, and the Bible says that only God should be worshiped:

Exodus 20:3-5 – Thou hast no other Gods before Me. Thou dost not make to thyself a graven image, or any likeness which [is] in the heavens above, or which [is] in the earth beneath, or which [is] in the waters under the earth. Thou dost not bow thyself to them, nor serve them: for I, Jehovah thy God, [am] a zealous God, charging iniquity of fathers on sons, on the third [generation], and on the fourth, of those hating Me, (YLT)

The Deity of Christ

Witnesses use the Bible to argue that Jesus was not God. One verse they use is John 14:

John 14:28 – ye heard that I said to you – I go away, and I come unto you; if ye did love me, ye would have rejoiced that I said – I go on to the Father, because my Father is greater than I. (YLT)

Jesus said that God the Father was greater than Him in terms of rank and position, not in terms of nature.

Hebrews 2:9 – and him who was made some little less than messengers we see – Jesus – because of the suffering of the death, with glory and honour having been crowned, that by the grace of God for every one he might taste of death. (YLT)

Hebrews says that Jesus was ranked lower than the angels (messengers) so that He was able to experience death. This does not contradict his nature as God. Look at these verses:

Matthew 28:18 – And having come near, Jesus spake to them, saying, Given to me was all authority in heaven and on earth (YLT)

John 10:30 – I and the Father are one. (YLT)

John 20:27-29 – then he saith to Thomas, Bring thy finger hither, and see my hands, and bring thy hand, and put [it] to my side, and become not unbelieving, but believing. And Thomas answered and said to him, My Lord and my God (YLT)

In Matthew, Jesus said that He was given authority of all of heaven and Earth. Only God can have this authority. In John 10, Jesus says that He and God the Father are one, which means they are the same being. In John 20, Thomas touches Jesus on His side, and then calls Him “My Lord and my God.” So not only does Thomas call Jesus God, he touches Him which proves that Jesus had a physical body after His resurrection. Remember that the Witnesses believe that Jesus only had a spiritual body after the resurrection. I briefly mentioned this in my article on the Rapture, where I talked about how Jesus could switch between a spiritual body and a physical body, and that the overcomers will have this ability as well when ruling with Christ.

Salvation

The Witnesses believe there are three groups of people. One, the unbelievers, who will be destroyed and cease to exist. (no lake of fire or eternal hell) Two, the “great crowd” who will live on “Paradise” on Earth after the destruction of the unbelievers. Three, the “little flock” who will enter heaven. The “little flock” consists of only 144,000 people (Rev. 14) and only they are truly “born again.” Their definition of salvation is being saved from destruction. So both the great crowd and the little flock groups are saved, but only the little flock is born again. Also, they believe salvation requires both faith and works, and it is possible to lose your salvation. According to Witnesses, here are the requirements for salvation:

“Jesus Christ identified a first requirement when he said in prayer to his Father: This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God,

and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ. (John 17:3) Knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ knowledge of God's purposes regarding the earth and of Christ's role as earth's new King. Will you take in such knowledge by studying the Bible?

"Many have found the second requirement more difficult. It is to obey God's laws, yes, to conform one's life to the moral requirements set out in the Bible. This includes refraining from a debauched, immoral way of life. 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; 1 Peter 4:3, 3.

"A third requirement is that we be associated with God's channel, his organization. God has always used an organization. For example, only those in the ark in Noah's day survived the Flood, and only those associated with the Christian congregation in the first century had God's favor. (Acts 4:12) Similarly, Jehovah is using only one organization today to accomplish his will. To receive everlasting life in the earthly Paradise we must identify that organization and serve God as part of it.

"The fourth requirement is connected with loyalty. God requires that prospective subjects of his Kingdom support his government by loyally advocating his Kingdom rule to others. Jesus Christ explained: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth." (Matthew 24:14) Will you meet this requirement by telling others about God's Kingdom?" - *The Watchtower*, Feb. 15, 1983, p. 12 (all four requirements)

In summary, the Witnesses say that in order to be saved you must (1) become knowledgeable about the Father, (2) obey God's laws, (3) be associated with the Jehovah's Witnesses, and (4) be loyal in spreading the kingdom news of God. The Christian view is that none of these four are required to be saved. We see this in Romans:

Romans 3:26-28 – for the shewing forth of His righteousness in the present time, for His being righteous, and declaring him righteous who [is] of the faith of Jesus. Where then [is] the boasting? it was excluded; by what law? of works? no, but by a law of faith: therefore do we reckon a man to be declared righteous by faith, apart from works of law. (YLT)

Romans 10:9-10 – that if thou mayest confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and mayest believe in thy heart that God did raise him out of the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart doth [one] believe to righteousness, and with the mouth is confession made to salvation (YLT)

From Romans, we know that faith alone grants us salvation, not knowledge, being in an organization, or spreading the gospel. However, part of salvation is

that we will have the intention and desire to obey God and do good works for Him. We will also gain knowledge over time by studying His word. I discussed in detail what it really takes to be saved in my article on Salvation. As a refresher, the following are required for true salvation under Christ:

1. Understanding that salvation is based on God's grace, and was never a free choice
2. Having faith that Jesus Christ is God, a God that loves you unconditionally, and admitting you have sin which is a problem, and you want God to help you take it away
3. Having the desire and intention to love and obey God 100%

The 144,000

Witnesses believe that only 144,000 people will be truly born again and will be able to enter into heaven. Their believe comes from this passage:

Revelation 14:3-5 – and they sing, as it were, a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders, and no one was able to learn the song except the hundred and forty-four thousands, who have been bought from the earth; these are they who with women were not defiled, for they are virgin; these are they who are following the Lamb whithersoever he may go; these were bought from among men – a first-fruit to God and to the Lamb – and in their mouth there was not found guile, for unblemished are they before the throne of God. (YLT)

This “little flock” that enters heaven is the Witnesses’ attempt to interpret the Bible’s symbol of the elite overcomers, but their interpretation is incorrect and inconsistent with the rest of God’s word. I covered this in The Barley Overcomers, as well as several other articles. These 144,000 are the first fruits that will take part in the first resurrection, and rule with Christ for 1,000 years. Remember these verses:

1 Corinthians 15:23-24 – and each in his proper order, a first-fruit Christ, afterwards those who are the Christ’s, in his presence, then – the end, when he may deliver up the reign to God, even the Father, when he may have made useless all rule, and all authority and power – (YLT)

Revelation 20:6 – Happy and hold [is] he who is having part in the first rising again; over these the second death hath not authority, but they shall be priests of God and of the Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (YLT)

The true three groups of God's kingdom are represented by the symbols of the three harvests barley, wheat and grape. In summary:

1. **Barley** – represents the overcomers, the sons of God, the elite 144,000, the first fruits, virgins that brought extra oil, blameless, will rise from the dead in the first resurrection, will reign with Christ for 1,000 years, will be saved from the lake of fire, will receive no form of punishment whatsoever, and will take part in the judgment of the other groups

2. **Wheat** – represents the Christian believers, righteous, did good things, virgins that did not bring extra oil, will rise from the dead in the second resurrection, will be saved from the lake of fire, but will receive beatings with stripes based on how much they prepared

3. **Grape** – represents non-believers, unrighteous, did evil things, abominable, murders, whoremongers, sorcerers, will rise from the dead in the second resurrection, will be thrown into the lake of fire which is God's judgment, will be purified until they become believers and realize the truth, due to the law of Jubilee

The Holy Spirit

The Jehovah's Witnesses also believe that the Holy Spirit is an active force, which is neither alive, nor God Himself. This is how they explain it:

“The Scriptures themselves untie to show that God's holy spirit is not a person but is God's active force by which accomplishes his purpose and executes his will” – *Aid to Bible Understanding*, p. 1543

“The Holy Spirit is the invisible active force of Almighty God that moves his servants to do his will” – *Let God Be True*, p. 108

The deity of the Holy Spirit can be proved by the attributes in which the Bible describes it. Take a look at these verses:

Romans 15:19 – in power of signs and wonders, in power of the Spirit of God; so that I, from Jerusalem, and in a circle as far as Illyricum, have fully preached the good news of the Christ; (YLT)

Revelation 2:7 – He who is having an ear – let him hear what the Spirit saith to the assemblies: To him who is overcoming – I will give to him to eat the tree of life that is in the midst of the paradise of God (YLT)

Matthew 12:31 – Because of this I say to you , all sin and evil speaking shall be forgiven to men, but the evil speaking of the Spirit shall not be forgiven to men (YLT)

Acts 5:3-4 – And Peter said, Anaiias, wherefore did the Adversary fill thy heart, for thee to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back of the price of the place? while it remained, did it not remain thine? and having been sold, in thy authority was it not? why [is] it that thou didst put in thy heart this thing? thou didst not lie to men, but to God; (YLT)

Romans 15 says that the Holy Spirit has power which is an attribute of God. Revelation 2 says that the Holy Spirit can speak and give knowledge to people, which proves it is alive. In Matthew 12, Jesus says that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven. This is because the Holy Spirit is God. In Acts 5, Peter uses the Holy Spirit in verse 3, but uses God in verse 4, so we can determine that the two are interchangeable because they are the same being. It is pretty clear that the Holy Spirit is God Himself. Let us now move on to the trinity.

The Trinity

Since the Witnesses don't believe that the Holy Spirit or Jesus are God, they don't believe in the trinity. Here is what they say:

“The Trinity doctrine was not conceived by Jesus or the early Christians. [...] the plain truth is that this is another of Satan's attempts to keep the God-fearing person from learning the truth of Jehovah and His Son Jesus Christ.” – *Let God Be True*, pp. 92-93

“Sincere persons who want to know the true God and serve Him find it a bit difficult to love and worship a complicated, freakish looking, three-headed God.” – *Let God Be True*, p. 102

They claim that the trinity was not taught by Jesus or early Christians. They also use scare tactics by blaming Satan and by calling the trinity a freakish three-headed God. In my article on Predestination, I talked about how we should not blame Satan for our problems because God uses Satan to execute His plan of glorification and restitution. Getting back to the trinity, here is what the Bible says:

Matthew 28:18-20 – And having come near, Jesus spake to them saying, Given to me all authority in heaven and on earth; having gone, then, disciple all the nations, (baptizing them – to the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the

Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all, whatever I did command you,) and lo, I am with you all the days – till the full end of the age (YLT)

In Matthew, Jesus said to baptize people in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Note that many churches today use this verse when performing a baptism by saying “I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” Now why would Jesus say this if the Son and the Holy Spirit were not God Himself? Baptism is a symbol of salvation, which is through God alone. For additional proof, take a look at John:

1 John 5:7 – because three are who are testifying [in the heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these – the three – are one; and three are who are testifying in the earth], the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and the three are into the one. (YLT)

1 John 1:1-3 – That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we did behold, and our hands did handle, concerning the Word of the Life – and the Life was manifested, and we have seen, and do testify, and declare to you the Life, the age-during, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us – that which we have seen and heard declare we to you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship [is] with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ; (YLT)

1 John 5 says that the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit are one being. Who is the Word? 1 John 1 tells us that the Word is Jesus. Therefore, the Bible proves that God has a trinity nature. He is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, all-in-one. An analogy of the trinity is H₂O. H₂O can be in different states of matter: steam, water, or ice. It can even be all three at the same time, but its molecular structure remains the same. So God can be in three different states at the same time, but He is still one being.

Blood Transfusions

One interesting belief that the Jehovah’s Witnesses have is their refusal to accept blood transfusions, even in life-threatening situations. Here are some quotes from their articles:

“In his great concern even about our life, he determined to reserve blood for use in one highly important way, the only way that makes everlasting life possible.”
– *Rightly Value Your Gift of Life*, June 15, 2004

“Decades ago Jehovah’s Witnesses made their stand clear. For example, they supplied an article to The Journal of the American Medical Association (November 27, 1981; reprinted in How Can Blood Save Your Life? Pages 27-0).

That article quoted from Genesis, Leviticus, and Acts. It said: ‘While these verses are not stated in medical terms, Witnesses view them as ruling out transfusions of whole blood, packed RBCs [red blood cells], and plasma, as well as WBC [white blood cell] and platelet administration.’ The 2001 textbook *Emergency Care*, under ‘Composition of the Blood,’ stated: ‘The blood is made up of several components: plasma, red and white blood cells, and platelets.’ Thus, in line with medical facts, Witnesses refuse transfusions of whole blood or any of its four primary components” – *Be Guided by the Living God*, June 15, 2004

So they argue that a person’s blood is required for eternal life, and that the Bible says this in Genesis, Leviticus, and Acts. Here are the verses that they are referring to:

Genesis 9:4 – only flesh in its life – its blood – ye do not eat. (YLT)

Leviticus 17:12-14 – Therefore I have said to the sons of Israel, No person among you doth eat blood, and the sojourner who is sojourning in your midst doth not eat blood; and any man of the sons of Israel, or of the sojourners, who is sojourning in your midst, who hunteth venison, beast or fowl, which is eaten – hath even poured out its blood and hath covered it with dust; for [it is] the life of all flesh, its blood is for its life; and I say to the sons of Israel, Blood of any flesh ye do not eat, for the life of all flesh is its blood; any one eating it is cut off. (YLT)

Acts 15:29 – to abstain from things offered to idols, and blood, and a strangled thing, and whoredom; from which keeping yourselves, ye shall do well; be strong! (YLT)

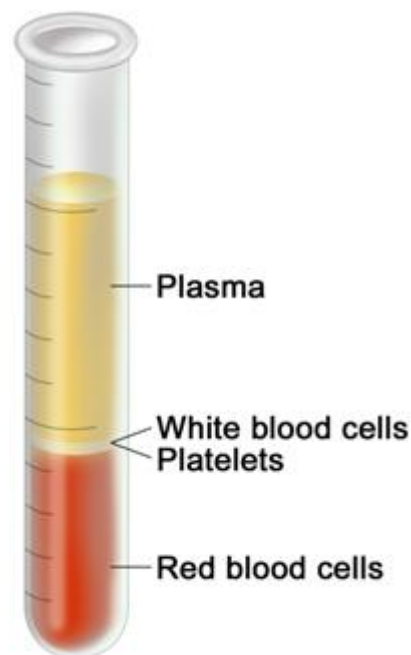
Acts 21:25 – And concerning those of the nations who have believed, we have written, having given judgment, that they observe no such thing, except to keep themselves both from idol-sacrifices, and blood, and a strangled thing, and whoredom. (YLT)

First of all, all of these verses say not to consume blood, and do not mention transfusion which is through the veins. Second, none of these verses mention eternal life. Eternal is a mistranslation in the Bible anyways as seen in my article *For Ever – A Mistranslation*. So why does the Bible say not to consume blood? Consuming blood will cause you to vomit. Why? The protein carrier of red blood cells, called hemoglobin, is mainly made up of iron. The high amount of iron in blood cannot be digested by your stomach, so you will vomit. God made many laws which are for your own health, because the medical knowledge during that time was very low. In Leviticus 11, God says what mammals, birds, fish, insects, etc. are safe to eat. Deuteronomy 23:10-13 says that if a person has

a disease, they are to take a bath and sit outside the camp. Diseases such as cholera, dysentery, and typhoid fever could have spread if the person stayed inside the camp, so God made this law.

Components of Blood

Now let us discuss the medical side of this issue. For those of you who don't know, here are the basic components of whole blood:



1. **Red Blood Cells** - attached to hemoglobin (discussed on last page), makes up about 45% of whole blood
2. **Plasma** – makes up about 55% of whole blood, an aqueous solution that is about 92% water and 8% blood proteins (albumin, hemoglobin with no RBCs attached), also contains very small amounts of clotting factors I through XIII
3. **White Blood Cells** – less than 1%
4. **Platelets** – less than 1%

Blood Diseases

The Witnesses refuse treatment with any of these four components of blood. So what kind of diseases would these components of whole blood help treat? Here is a summary:

1. **Red Blood Cells** – called packed RBCs in medicine to prevent confusion with whole blood, used to treat various types of anemia (due to chronic disease, iron

deficiency, sickle cell, thalassemia, etc.) in which there is a reduced amount of red blood cells, also used to treat blood loss after giving birth

2. **Plasma** – called fresh frozen plasma in medicine, used when a patient has trouble clotting, due to taking Warfarin, rat poisoning, or disseminated intravascular coagulation

3. **White Blood Cells** – not used for treatment, because would be ineffective in a patient with low white blood cells

4. **Platelets** – used to stop bleeding in diseases which cause a reduced amount of platelets, such as aspirin induced thrombocytopenia

So a Jehovah's Witness will refuse treatment for all of these diseases because they hold onto a few Bible verses which were meant for their health in the first place. God created people, but He also created medicine and science to help us. This medical problem is even worse for children. In the U.S., a person can only make their own decisions about their own health care when they are 18 and over (adult), are married, or have a child of their own. So if they are under 18, the parents make the decisions. However, they cannot withhold life or limb saving treatment from their children. So, there are many cases which have been taken to court, because the Witness parent refuses to save their child. In one case in Alberta, Canada in 2002, a 52-year old father was faced with the news that his 17-year old daughter was dying from acute myeloid leukemia. The daughter did not want treatment, but the father decided to go against the Witnesses and take the treatment. Here is what he said:

“I was under tremendous pressure. Because I knew that if I went against what the church taught, that I would be excommunicated and no Jehovah's witness would ever speak to me again, including my own family... When I made the decision with a clear conscience, I went into my daughter's hospital room. My whole family was there, and I told them about my decision, saying: No matter what happens with this case, I still love you, each and every one of you. And their reply, each one of them was: ‘We hate you and we'll never speak to you again.’” – Canadian Press, Feb, 2002

So you can see how much pressure the Jehovah's Witnesses puts on their members. It was to the point that his own family was against him. Unfortunately, Bethany Hughes past away on Sept. 5, 2002, after eight months of fighting with leukemia. This behavior is no doubt that of a cult. Jesus taught never to shun people away because of their beliefs. He washed His disciples feet and had dinner with his enemies. Romans 12:20-21 says that we should overcome evil with good.

Holidays

The Witnesses refuse to celebrate birthdays, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter, Christmas, or any other holidays not found in the Bible.

“birthday celebrations tend to give excessive importance to an individual [...] Jehovah's Witnesses do not share in birthday festivities (parties, singing, gift giving, and so forth)” – *School and Jehovah's Witnesses*, 1983

“nowhere in the Bible do we find that parents are to be worshiped, or that there should be a Father's Day and a Mother's Day kept in their honor.” – *Awake!*, May 8, 1956

“Through the pages of the Bible, Jehovah has made it clear that he hates all forms of deception (Psalm 5:6) In view of this, is it not ironic that so many features associated with Christmas smack of falsehood?” – *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1997, p.6

“Christendom's chief holiday, Easter, therefore finds no support at all in the Bible. It is a pagan origin.” – *The Truth that Leads to Eternal Life*, 1986

Most holiday celebrations are harmless. They do not contradict the Bible. To say that Mother's Day or Father's Day is a worship of parents is ridiculous. It is to show respect and appreciation, not worship. However, there are reasons why people question Christmas and Easter.

Christmas

Where did Christmas come from? It started in ancient civilizations, when people were afraid in the winter that the Sun would disappear and that Earth would freeze. They also noticed that some plants and trees remained green all year long and believed that these plants would give them powers to survive the winter. So, they decorated their homes with pine, spruce, fir, date palm, and evergreen trees in the winter. Around the first century, the early Romans made a holiday out of this called winter solstice, honoring Saturn, the god of agriculture. (Henotheism) In 378 A.D., early Christians turned this winter solstice into a celebration of Jesus and had a feast on December 25. This celebration was later called Christmas.

What about Santa Claus? The name Santa Claus comes from the Dutch name Sinterklaas, which means Saint Nicholas. Nicholas was a Bishop of Myra, Turkey during the 4th century. Once a year, he threw a feast on December 6, in which he wore bishop attire, and gave gifts to children based on their behavior. This feast with gift-giving became a tradition every year in Northern Europe. By

the 13th century, this tradition began spreading south. In the 17th century, this gift giving celebration was changed from December 6 to December 24, Christmas Eve. The tradition of Christmas caroling also began around this time.

Where did the Christmas tree come from? In 1761, when Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz married King George III, the Christmas tree was introduced as both a wedding gift and a celebration of Christmas. In 1870, Christmas was formally made a United States Federal holiday, by President Ulysses Grant. So Christmas has both pagan and Christian origins. However, the origin of the holiday should have no bearing on today's celebration. Today, most people celebrate Christmas to honor family and enjoy life. This is a positive and good celebration, regardless of the origin.

Easter

What is the origin of Easter? Easter started after the great flood in Genesis, with Noah's grandson Nimrod. Nimrod was a king that created the cities of Babel, Ninevah, Asshur, and Calla, all known for sinful lifestyles. When Nimrod died, his wife, Semiramis turned Nimrod into a god, known as the Sun-god, life giver, or Baal. Then, Tammuz, the son of Semiramis, convinced people that he was actually Nimrod reborn, and was the prophesized savior of man from Genesis 3:15. This led people to worship Tammuz as well as Semiramis for her great fertility powers. Semiramis was also called Ishtar, Ashtar, and EASTER. Babylonians also started a fable about an egg that fell into the Euphrates River from heaven and hatched Semiramis. Because rabbits were fertile and tend to have large litters, they were associated with Semiramis as well.

In the first century, the early Christian Church in the first century turned Easter into the celebration of martyrs; those that died for their belief in Christ. In the next few centuries, it became a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, instead of Nimrod. As this gained popularity, churches began to argue over the date of Easter. Easter is calculated to be on the first Sunday after the first full moon, after the 14th day of the 4th month of the year. Why did they make it so complicated? This is because there were two major calendars used during this time, both Julian and Jewish calendars. These two calendars do not match up, so the 14th day of the 4th month is different for both calendars. When the Gregorian calendar was introduced in 1582, there was even more arguments about the date of Easter.

In the 1950s, it was tradition for churches to not ring their bells a few days before Easter, to mourn the death of Jesus. So, Belgium and The Netherlands made up a story for kids that church bells were silent a few days before Easter because they flew out of their steeples. The church bells then returned on Easter with chocolate shaped like eggs and rabbits. Also around the same time, in

England, Ireland, as well as Scotland, a tradition started in which children rolled decorated eggs down hills to symbolize the rolling away of Jesus' tombstone. In the United States, they began a tradition of hiding decorated eggs and having children find them.

Easter has an interesting origin because it originally came from the prophesized savior that God spoke of in the Garden of Eden. However, people simply made their own savior too early on, instead of waiting for Jesus. This led to eggs and rabbits. So it does have some pagan origin, but the pagans got the idea of a savior from God Himself.

Conclusion

The Jehovah's Witnesses are a cult which claims to have Christian beliefs based on the Bible. However, they use their own version of the Bible, as well as their own publications, to manipulate the beliefs of their followers. They do not even believe that Jesus Christ was God, which is the most essential belief under the term "Christianity." Also, their definition and requirements for "salvation" is completely different than that of Christians. While Christians believe that being saved or being "born again" is the same thing, Witnesses believe that only those "born again" will enter heaven, while those being "saved" will live forever on an Earthly paradise. They also believe that their blood will allow them to have eternal life, therefore refuse blood transfusions, although there is no Biblical evidence to back this up. Finally, their refusal to participate in most holidays shows more hate than love, and gives further question to their claim to be Christian.

Wicca

What do they believe? When did it start?

Background

Wicca is a diverse religious belief system centered around worshiping various gods, goddesses, and nature. Its practice involves rituals in attempt to gain power, prestige, and love. It is considered Neo-Pagan because it is based on pre-Christian and pre-modern-Europe religious movements. It has priests and priestesses which are leaders within covens that have witches. There are many varieties of Wicca including Gardnerian, Alexandrian, Celtic, Dianic, and Eclectic. It is also important to note that Wicca is recognized as a religion by the United States' Internal Revenue Service.

The Two Codes

There are two basic codes that Wiccans follow. One is the Wiccan Rede which states, “An Ye Harm None, Do What Ye Will.” This means that a Wiccan is free to use magic, as long as it does not harm anyone. This statement was first publicly recorded in 1964 in a speech by Dorren Valiente. However, similar phrases were written by Aleister Crowley in 1904, and Francois Rabelais in 1534. Also, “harm” can have many interpretations, unlike ethics written in the Bible, which has many of examples.

The second code is known as the Threefold Law. This law states that whatever energy a person puts out into the world, be it positive or negative, will be returned to that person three times. The first published reference to this law was in 1968, by Raymond Buckland in *Beyond* magazine.

General Beliefs

Because of its pagan roots, Wiccans believe in many gods and goddesses. They believe that these were created by a supreme divine power known as “The One,” or “The All,” which is a part of the universe. They also believe that these gods and goddesses can manifest to each person differently, and that no one god has one name with defined characteristics. Therefore, there are many contradictions in their gods. This appeals to people who want to believe in their own belief system.

Wiccans also believe that all life is sacred which includes all plants, animals, and humans. They believe in equality of the sexes, evolution, reincarnation, and karma. Upon death, they believe a person is released back to a place called Summerland. They do not practice sex orgies nor intentionally cast spells on people in order to harm them. However, they sometimes use ritual nudity, known as skyclad.

Wicca Terms

Astral Projection – the practice of separating the spirit from the body and having that spirit move around the world

Balefire – a fire used for magical purposes

Book of Shadows – a book of rituals and spells, there is no single official book, but many versions

Blood of the Moon – the time of a woman’s greatest energy, usually during menstruation

Chakra – a location of energy in the body, typically there are said to be seven specific locations

Channeling – the practice of allowing another spirit to speak through you

Chanting – the use of reptitious words and or rhymes

Coven – a group of Wiccans, usually thirteen

Familiar – an animal that has a bond with a witch

Runes – figures or symbols in rocks, clay, or candles that enhance magic

Skyclad – ritual nudity

Underworld – the spirit realm of the dead

Holy Days (Sabbats)

Wiccans celebrate four major dates based on the seasons. They claim that these days have been followed for thousands of years by ancient cultures such as the Nordic, the Celtic, and the Greek.

Imbolc – aka Groundhog’s Day, Festival of Milk, Feb. 2, celebrates fertility, middle of winter, milk was traditionally poured out upon the ground, associated with amethyst, turquoise, dill, white, pink, and red

Beltane – aka May Day, April 30 or May 1, celebrates return of fertility after winter, associated with sapphire, honeysuckle, jasmine, green, yellow, and red

Lughnasadh – aka First Harvest, Aug. 1, celebrates the beginning of harvest, associated with ginseng, grapes, potatoes, berries, green, and orange

Samhain – aka All Hallows Eve, Day of the Dead, Oct. 31, celebrates new year, associated with obsidian, onyx, apples, corn, pears, and black

The Burning Times

“The Burning Times” is a period spanning from 1300 to 1800 in which many Wiccans were persecuted and killed throughout Europe and in the British American colonies. About 80% of the accused were women who were magicians, diviners, scholars, midwives, and healers. The accusers included the Catholic Church, the Inquisition, secular governments, intellectuals, the common folk, doctors, and Wiccans themselves. The Catholic Church used one verse in Exodus as an excuse:

Exodus 22:18 – A witch thou dost not keep alive. (YLT)

Also, Wiccans themselves often blamed each other to protect themselves. “White” witches often blamed “black” witches. White witches healed and removed spells, while black witches cursed and killed. However, from a Christian point of view, we are all sinners, and we are only alive due to the grace of God. It is not our place to judge others as “good” or “bad,” but God’s alone. Eventually, upper class rationalists realized that too many people were being senselessly hurt or killed without any proof. The lower class then followed, and the Burning Times came to an end.

Wiccan Traditions

Like many other religions, Wicca has a variety of denominations, called traditions. I will cover the main ones here.

Gardnerian – Gardnerian Wicca was founded by Gerad Gardner in England during the 1950s. It is considered one of the oldest forms of Wicca and the beginning of the Wicca Movement. Garner compiled the first Book of Shadows, used blindfolding, Tarot cards, wands, chalices, pentacles, and ritual nudity.

Alexandrian – Alexandrian Wicca started in England by Alex and Maxine Sanders as a variation of Gardnerian in the 1960s. Alex is known as “The King of the Witches.” Alexandrian focuses on ceremonial magic during the Sabbats.

Celtic – The Celtic path encompasses Druidism, Celtic Shamanism, Celtic Wicca, the Grail Religion, and Celtic Christianity. These traditions are derived from ancient Celtic Polytheism in 500 B.C. They focus on nature, healing, herbalism, and land spirits.

Dianic – Dianic excludes males and male gods and is known as the Feminist Wicca. They are often involved in politics, and were associated with the feminist movement of the 1960s.

Eclectic – Eclectic means to select from a variety of sources. Thus, Eclectic Wicca is the practice of adopting any Wiccan traditions for an individual. They also can adopt gods from other religions; including Jesus.

The Bible

What does the Bible say about Wiccan practices? Here are a few verses:

Leviticus 19:31 – Ye do not turn unto those having familiar spirits; and unto wizards ye do not seek, for uncleanness by them; I [am] Jehovah your God. (YLT)

Deuteronomy 18:10-14 – there is not found in thee one causing his son and his daughter to pass over into fire, a user of divinations, an observer of clouds, and an enchanter, and a sorcerer, and a charmer, and one asking at a familiar spirit, and a wizard, and one seeking unto the dead. For the abomination of Jehovah [is] every one doing these, and because of these abominations is Jehovah thy God dispossessing them from thy presence. Perfect thou art with Jehovah thy God, for these nations whom thou art possessing, unto observers of clouds, and unto diviners, do hearken; and thou – not so hath Jehovah thy God suffered thee. (YLT)

2 Kings 21:6 – and he hath caused his son to pass through fire, and observed clouds, and used enchantment, and dealt with a familiar spirit and wizards; he hath multiplied to do the evil thing in the eyes of Jehovah – to provoke to anger. (YLT)

Conclusion

Wicca is a very diverse religion with many different traditions. If you come across someone who believes in Wicca, it is important to respect them, because they may have good ethics, but are simply misinformed. Asking questions about their beliefs and listening is one of the best ways to approach them. Eventually, you will find inconsistencies in which you can insert Christian views to fill their gaps. Christianity is the only consistent religion because it is the only true one.

Questionnaire on Christian Apologetics

Christian apologetics is the reasoned defence of the Christian faith against objections, but also includes the setting forth of positive grounds for Christianity. It is the duty of all Christians, because:

The Lord Jesus Christ commanded: ‘Love the Lord your God ... with all your *mind*.’ (Matthew 22:37)

The Apostle Peter commanded Christians: ‘Always be prepared to *give an answer* to everyone who asks you to *give the reason* for the hope that you have.’ (1 Peter 3:15)

Jude's inspired epistle said: 'I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to *contend earnestly for the faith* which was once for all delivered to the saints.' (v. 3)

The Apostle Paul said: 'We *demolish arguments* and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we *take captive every thought* to make it obedient to Christ' (2 Corinthians 10:5).

Questions

1. What is Christian apologetics?
2. Does God exist?
3. Is one God really three persons?
4. How can an all-good God allow evil in the world?
5. What about the attributes and names of God?
6. Why bother defending the faith? Explain.
7. Are people actually saved as a result of apologetics?
8. How does Christianity differ from Islam and modern Judaism?
9. How can we defend absolute truth and morality?
10. Is Jesus really God?
11. What is the evidence that Jesus ever existed?
12. Did Jesus Christ really rise from the dead?
13. Was Christ really born of a virgin?
14. Is it rational to believe in Jesus' miracles?
15. Why is Jesus Christ given the title of 'the last Adam' in 1 Corinthians 15:45?
16. Does the Bible contain information that was 'ahead of its day'? Is this evidence for its divine inspiration?
17. When were the biblical books written?
18. How is the Bible translated? What are some of the issues involved?
19. Can the Bible mean anything we want? Or are there clear rules for interpreting it?
20. Should Genesis be taken literally?
21. Is biblical interpretation infallible, and does it matter?
22. Is there a universal way Christians should interpret the Bible?
23. Isn't evolution purely scientific, and religiously neutral?
24. Aren't Christians intolerant, unlike humanists?
25. Richard Dawkins, the 'Apostle of Atheism': how can he be answered?

Read the Bible Online

In English

King James Version (Public Domain Version)

<http://www.allonlinebible.com/>

In Dutch

<http://www.online-bijbel.nl/>

In French

Version Louis Segond (Normalement Domaine Publique)

<http://www.christianevents.mu/lire-bible-francais-louis-segond.html>

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